

From the Library of

RALPH EMERSON FORBES

1866-1937









HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FIELD  
SERVICE IN FRANCE









*Painted by Charles Hoffbauer*

"A SKY MOROSE, TEMPESTUOUS, BLACK,  
THE LOW HORIZON MISTY-WAN,  
AND SILENT O'ER THE LONG, LONG TRACK  
A COLUMN SLOWLY TRUDGING ON."



*History of the  
American Field Service in France*

"FRIENDS OF FRANCE"

1914 - 1917

TOLD BY ITS MEMBERS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

*Volume II*



1914 - 1917.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

1920

F75

A4

V.2

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

UNIV. OF MASSACHUSETTS  
AT BOSTON - LIBRARY



## CONTENTS

### VOLUME II

SECTION TEN	I
Hamilton Lillie, 3. William D. Swan, Jr., 11. James W. Harle, Jr., 16. Henry M. Suckley, 27. Frank J. Taylor, 28. Burnet C. Wohlford, 37. William J. Losh, 40.	
SECTION TWELVE	43
Croom W. Walker, Jr., 45. Julien H. Bryan, 53. Ralph N. Barrett, 59.	
SECTION THIRTEEN	63
Benjamin F. Butler, Jr., 65. John M. Grierson, 75. Frank X. Laflamme, 81.	
SECTION FOURTEEN	83
Joseph H. Eastman, 85. William J. Losh, 90. Franklin B. Skeelee, 94.	
SECTION FIFTEEN	101
Clitus Jones, 103. Keith Vosburg, 108. Jerome Preston, 111 and 135.	
SECTION SIXTEEN	137
Franklin D. W. Glazier, 139. Alpheus E. Shaw, 145. James H. Lewis, 149. Marshal G. Penfield, 151.	

## CONTENTS

---

SECTION SEVENTEEN	153
James W. D. Seymour, 155 and 172. Basil K. Neftel, 187. Carleton F. Wright, 189.	
SECTION EIGHTEEN	193
Ernest R. Schoen, 195 and 209. Robert A. Donaldson, 215.	
SECTION NINETEEN	219
Paul A. Rie, 221. Charles C. Jatho, 232. Frank G. Royce, 237. John D. Loughlin, 243. Edward P. Shaw, 245.	
SECTION TWENTY-SIX	247
Charles E. Bayly, Jr., 249. Gilbert N. Ross, 254. Joseph Lévêque, 255. Ellis D. Slater, 259.	
SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN	261
Howard R. Coan, 263 and 269. Coleman G. Clark, 276.	
SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT	277
Frederic R. Colie, 279. John B. Hurlbut, 285. Stanley Hill, 291. Converse Hill, 293.	
SECTION SIXTY-FOUR	295
Richard W. Westwood, 297.	
SECTION SIXTY-FIVE	301
Louis G. Caldwell, 303. Raymond W. Gauger, 317. Paul A. Redmond, 319.	
SECTION TWENTY-NINE	321
John T. Walker, Jr., 323. Richard O. Battles, 329.	
SECTION SIXTY-SIX	333
Stanley B. Jones, 335. William G. Rice, Jr., 339. Perley R. Hamilton, 342. Walter D. Carr, 346.	
SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN	349
Kenneth M. Reed, 351. Norman C. Nourse, 357.	

## CONTENTS

---

SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT	361
Sidney C. Doolittle, 363 and 366.	
SECTION SIXTY-NINE	369
Henry B. Rigby, 371. Robert R. Ball, 374.	
SECTION THIRTY	379
Albert E. MacDougall, 381 and 386. J. Oliver Beebe, 402.	
SECTION SEVENTY	405
Robert A. Donaldson, 407 and 412. Arthur J. Putnam, 410.	
SECTION THIRTY-ONE	423
Kent D. Hagler, 425. C. C. Battershell, 432. Gordon F. L. Rogers, 434.	
SECTION SEVENTY-ONE	437
Philip Shepley, 439. Edward A. Weeks, Jr., 442.	
SECTION THIRTY-TWO	447
Gurnee H. Barrett, 449. John S. Clapp, 455.	
SECTION THIRTY-THREE	457
Robert Rieser, 459. Richard C. Paine, 462.	
SECTION SEVENTY-TWO	463
John H. Woolverton, 465.	

## FIELD SERVICE HAUNTS AND FRIENDS

TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD	469
Raymond W. Gauger, 470. Raymond Weeks, 471. Stephen Galatti, 475. Joseph R. Greenwood, 490. David Darrah, 494. James W. D. Seymour, 496.	
TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES	499
John R. Fisher, 499, 505. H. Burt Herrick, 511. Robert A. Donaldson, 513. Stephen Galatti, 516.	

## CONTENTS

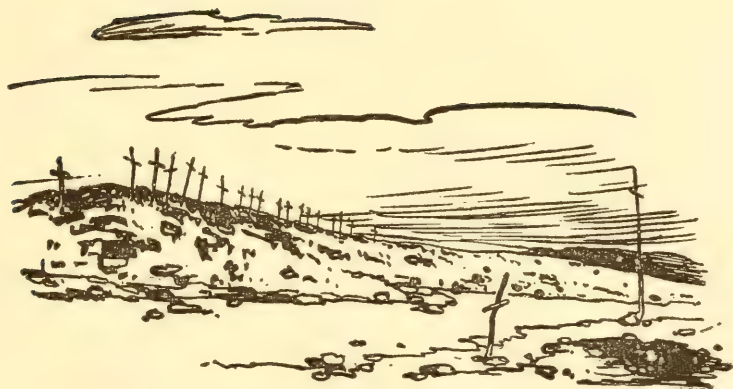
---

TWO LOYAL FRIENDS OF THE FIELD SERVICE 519  
Arthur J. Putnam, 519. Preston Lockwood, 521.

FRENCH OFFICERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
SERVICE 523  
Stephen Galatti.







## ILLUSTRATIONS

### VOLUME II

"... A COLUMN SLOWLY TRUDGING ON" ( <i>in color</i> )	
— Charles Hoffbauer	<i>Frontispiece</i>
AN ALBANIAN ROAD NEAR FLORINA	6
CONVOYS OF SUPPLIES IN ALBANIA	6
FRENCH COLONIALS ON THE MONASTIR FRONT	12
CEMETERY NEAR KORITZA, WHERE SUCKLEY IS BURIED	20
CROSSING THE SAKULEVO RIVER	30
ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK!	30
"WHERE ROADS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN RIVER-BEDS"	40
THE CHÂTEAU OF ESNES "POSTE"	48
CAMOUFLAGE ON THE ESNES ROAD	48
POILUS OF TO-MORROW WATCHING AN AIR-BATTLE	56
A HALT "EN ROUTE"	70
TWO TYPES OF FRENCH GAS-MASKS	70
FIELD HOSPITAL AT CLAIRS-CHÊNES	86
SECTION FOURTEEN LEAVING "RUE RAYNOUARD"	86
AMBULANCE PANEL OF THE LELAND STANFORD SECTION ( <i>in color</i> )	94
THE "MORNING AFTER" A COLLISION	106
ESNES NEAR MORT HOMME	106

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

THE EIFFEL TOWER — NEIGHBOR OF OUR PASSY DAYS	118
THE SNOWS OF CHAMPAGNE	130
NEAR HEXEN-WEG IN THE VALLEYS OF THE "MONTS"	130
EVEN THIS — "POUR LA PATRIE"	142
THE CANAL NEAR MONTGRIGNON	142
HOME IN FRANCE	160
THE WINTER TRAIL TO THE TRENCHES	176
"BOYAUX" TO THE FORTS OF VERDUN	176
THE FLAGS OF FRANCE	188
"DUCK AND DODGE AND TWIST IN THE DARKNESS" ( <i>in color</i> ) — <i>Charles Hoffbauer</i>	198
ABOVE VERDUN	212
THE VACHERAUVILLE "POSTE"	212
AT A "POSTE" AT THE VERY FRONT	224
LOADING THE AMBULANCE	236
CHATTANCOURT STATION — THE SECOND-LINE TRENCHES	252
WHEN LABOR SLACKENS	252
DRESSING-STATION BEFORE MOURMELON	266
THE FERME DE MOSCOU "POSTE DE SECOURS"	266
LOADING A "COUCHÉ" AT CONSTANTINE	280
GAS ON THE ROAD!	280
LA CROIX DE GUERRE FRANÇAISE ( <i>in color</i> )	290
THE FINAL DRIVING TEST AT MAY	304
VIEW OF THE FARM AT MAY-EN-MULTIEN	304
THE END OF AN AMBULANCE	316
LA TERRE PROMISE	326
GENERAL NIESSEL AT THE GRAVE OF HAMILTON AND GAILEY	342
A BORROWED FRENCH AMBULANCE OF SECTION SIXTY-SIX	354
VASSOGNE AFTER A NIGHT OF SHELLING	354
"UNDER WHAT TROUBLED SKIES YOUR STEPS HAVE LED YOU" ( <i>in color</i> ) — <i>Charles Hoffbauer</i>	366
AMBULANCE AT A DRESSING-STATION NEAR VERDUN	376

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

EVACUATING A HOSPITAL	388
TRANSFERRING THE WOUNDED TO A TRAIN	388
THE COL DE BUSSANG	400
FORT MALMAISON!	410
ARRIVAL OF A "COUCHÉ" ON A "BROUETTE"	410
AMBULANCE "POSTE" AT CAPPY ( <i>in color</i> ) — <i>Victor White</i>	420
"POSTE DE SECOURS" AT MONTAUVILLE	432
WHEN CLEANLINESS IS A MYTH	442
WHERE ARMY-BLUE TURNS TO KHAKI	442
THE GARDEN OF "RUE RAYNOUARD" IN WINTER	454
STATUETTE IN TRIBUTE TO SECTION NINE AND THE SERVICE	460
HEAD-TABLE AT THE FAREWELL DINNER TO SECTION FOURTEEN	480
ON THE TERRACE OF "21"	490
MR. ANDREW ADDRESSING NEWLY ARRIVED VOLUNTEERS	490
ONE OF THE EARLIEST OFFICERS' SCHOOLS AT MEAUX	500
THE TRAINING-CAMP AT MAY-EN-MULTIEN	510
LA COMTESSE DE LA VILLESTREUX	520
MRS. WILLIAM K. VANDERBILT	522
LIEUTENANTS RODOCANACHI AND DE KERSAUSON	526
LIEUTENANTS D'HALLOY AND DE RODE	530
LIEUTENANT DE TURCKHEIM AND CAPITAINE GENIN	534



# HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE IN FRANCE

∴

## *Section Ten*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. HAMILTON LILLIE
- II. WILLIAM DENNISON SWAN, JR
- III. JAMES W. HARLE, JR.
- IV. HENRY M. SUCKLEY
- V. FRANK J. TAYLOR
- VI. BURNET C. WOHLFORD
- VII. WILLIAM J. LOSH

## SUMMARY

SECTION TEN began and ended its history in the Balkans. It was sent to the Balkan front on December 26, 1916, arriving in Salonica January 8, 1917. On February 12 its cars and equipment were assembled, and it left in convoy for the Albanian front, taking quarters in the town of Koritza, and working *postes* at Gorica and Swezda. The first group of men to serve in the Section were relieved at the end of their six months, and left Koritza on July 4, when they heard that the new men had landed at Salonica. The new men of the Section, a Stanford University unit, found the cars at Koritza, and took over the work immediately. On September 5, 1917, it followed the French-Albanian offensive from Lake Malik to Lake Ochrida, and moved the *postes* on over the mountains to Pogredec and Lesnicha. When the Government finally took over the work of the American Field Service, and declined to maintain these sanitary sections against nations with which the United States was not yet officially at war, the cars, along with those of Section Three, were given to the French Government, and the men disbanded and returned to France.





## *Section Ten*

Soaring France!  
Now is humanity on trial in thee:  
Now may'st thou gather humankind in fee:  
Now prove that Reason is a quenchless scroll;  
Make of calamity thine aureole,  
And, bleeding, lead us through the troubles of the sea.  
GEORGE MEREDITH

### I

#### DEPARTURE FOR MARSEILLES

*Written on the train, December 27, 1916*

SECTION TEN had its farewell dinner last evening and we then scrambled from the dining-room at 21 rue Raynouard into autos which took us to the Lyons Station, whence our train left about 10.50 P.M. for Marseilles.

We got through the long night somehow, sleeping on the floor or any place we could find. This morning we stopped at a little town on a canal and got some very poor coffee and a hunk of bread apiece. Some of us then went into an oyster and snail establishment, being attracted by some smiling maidens in the windows. As a result, Robbie and I barely managed to get on one of the freight cars as the train pulled out, while our French Lieutenant and a number of the others have been left behind.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*December 28*

TEN P.M. and we are still in this damned old train. The fellows who were left behind at Laroche got on an express train which passed us and when we reached Dijon there they were in the station, with wide grins on their faces. This morning's ride was perfectly delightful, for we are in the south of France, which is full of rocky hills, old, crumbling, ivy-covered towers, and gardens with palms growing in them. The sunshine makes perfect weather. Most of us rode on the freight boxes, where are our cars, in order to get a good view of everything.

*December 29*

WE arrived in Marseilles after a journey of fifty-four hours in the train. I never saw respectable fellows as dirty as we. Bright sunshine and a throng of Orientals, English, Russians, and soldiers of all nations make the city most interesting.

### ON SHIPBOARD IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

*January 3, 1917*

GOT on board the Lotus, on which we sail for Salonica. Our rooms are down in the steerage, where "niggers" sprawl all over the passage, and there is no water for washing and no sanitary arrangements. A company of two hundred and fifty Russians is on board. Mules being hauled up with derricks. Our boat sailed at three o'clock, passing a steamer with bows all stove in. A pretty choppy sea outside the harbor made men all over the ship sick and the mules "galloped in neutral" at every jounce. It was too dirty below, so we slept on the floor of the second-class smoking-room.

*January 5*

WE were off the islands all day yesterday, and the dark, grim-looking mountains with houses dotted over them made wonderful scenery. In the afternoon we met two small French cruisers which hung around till dark. A

## SECTION TEN

---

French torpedo-boat destroyer convoyed us all night. We slept on deck, using life-belts as pillows. This morning is fine. We have been about a mile off the coast of Tunis all morning. Supposed to be going to Malta next for coal.

### LIFE IN SALONICA

*January 9*

WE got into Salonica Harbor late last night. Since there were no buildings for us we had to pitch a camp of three bell tents which are very crowded. We eat in a long, low, wooden shed with the *poilus* and "niggers." It is rough food, but might be worse. And our table manners have become deplorable. "Grab what you can and eat it quickly before some one gets it away from you," seems to be the rule. Never saw anything so picturesque or so dirty as this extraordinary town with its mosques, minarets, and Oriental types. There are soldiers of all Allied nations, and natives with queer uniforms, baggy trousers, and tasselled shoes. We had a great view from the old Venetian wall this morning. We saw nothing at first but the tips of the Turkish minarets through the mist. Later the sun conquered the fog and we saw the whole city and harbor stretched out before us.

*January 14*

TO-DAY was the Greek Christmas and a big *fête* day. All the stores were closed; the peasants did strange dances in the streets; and everywhere we saw queer-looking musical boxes carried through the towns on the backs of old bearded men, while young striplings walked behind turning the crank.

*January 15*

SEVERAL queer things happened this morning. While we were still in bed, we heard shots in the distance, and Mac<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gordon Kenneth MacKenzie, of Boston, Massachusetts; joined the Field Service in November, 1916; served with Section Ten in the Balkans and Section Two in France; enlisted in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service, September, 1917; died of wounds received in action, June 14, 1918.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

happened to remark that nothing could get him out of bed but the actual bombardment of the tent. A few moments later, there was a little "smack" and a long rifle bullet ripped through Bruns's blankets and buried its nose in the ground. It only missed his leg by an inch. A Frenchman was hit in the head by another bullet and stunned. They were Greek bullets, but the mystery is not yet solved.

Batch and I went up to the old Turkish prison this morning, a place very dirty and interesting. Outside it was a Greek battery, and just as we got under it they fired about twenty salutes for Venizelos, who is in town. Afterwards, while we were in a café, a Greek priest came in, walked up behind the bar-boys, and splashed them with a bunch of flowers which he dipped in water carried by his little acolyte. When he had made three dabs on their faces, they gave him money, and he then left. They have queer habits in these regions!

### OVER THE MOUNTAINS TO ALBANIA

*Monday, February 12*

WE left camp in our ambulances this morning for Albania, over the Greek mountains, leaving on our right bare, brown-green hills and encampments, military bridges, very few trees, earthworks and barbed-wire entanglements, marshes and a desert, with sand all around. After sundry troubles, especially with the kitchen car which we could never think of leaving behind, we skirted under a high mountain, through some woods, and made camp for the night.

*February 13*

WE stopped in Vodena, a quaint old town, for lunch. Here by Kimono Lake, where we longed to shoot wild ducks, we heard guns for the first time. We camped for the night on a freezingly cold plateau.

*February 14*

IT is colder than ever and we're on the worst road yet. The morning was spent pushing. We had no food till we





A HALT ON AN ALBANIAN ROAD NEAR FLORINA



CONVOYS OF SUPPLIES FOR THE FRENCH TROOPS IN ALBANIA





## SECTION TEN

---

got to Ostrovo by a beautiful lake, the scene of a battle, with shell-holes all around. Farther on was another awful hill, on which we camped cold and tired after pushing each other's ambulances most of the way.

*February 16*

Two cars went into a ditch near Banitza, a very curious town. Bruns turned two somersaults into a ditch twenty feet deep. In the afternoon I carried my first Serb soldier. We are now on a fine road nearing big auto camps on the plains ahead. There is snow on the mountains as usual. By supper-time we arrived at Florina, where we got potatoes, meat, and beans in an old dirty tavern.

*Sunday, February 18*

WE left Florina about 9 A.M. and faced the biggest climb yet, a perfectly terrific one, like the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. My car ran wonderfully and I was only pushed twice. It is lovely weather, but the road is covered with deep mud and ruts. Mules are there by thousands. Boche prisoners are working on roads. It was difficult driving between the mules and carts and the precipice. Later we splashed through swollen streams, and in one I bent the crank-case on a huge rock. Another car came up soon and we had lunch of *singe* and a little bread. After lunch all went on but Fitz and me. I was finally towed by a Packard six kilometres to camping ground. Eventually, I had to run the car as she was, despite the clanking noise.

## WORK ON THE ALBANIAN FRONT

*March 10*

I WAS on duty at Gorica, near Lake Presba. I slept in a barn on dirty straw. This is a queer little village of wicker and mud huts. The women are hard at work carrying wood, while the men stand around doing nothing. The total excitement of the inhabitants is picking lice off each other in doorways.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

March 11

AWAKENED by guns, I knew the attack had begun at last. Our cars went to a *poste* two kilometres over the Serbian boundary and got the wounded who came down the mountains slung on mules. They are horribly messed up, some of them.

March 20

DAYS of hard work, carrying wounded over awful roads, and on to Koritza. I shall never forget scenes in the hospital there, where wounded were dumped down on straw in fearful pain, many of them. The camp at Zemlak was bombed, and Henry Suckley, our *Chef*, was injured so badly that he died in a few hours. His funeral was held to-day at Koritza, where he was buried in the little Christian cemetery. *Sous-Chef* Kimberly Stuart will be in charge of the unit.

April 15

OUR Headquarters are moved to Koritza, with *postes* at Swezda and Gorica. At Zemlak we live in a Turkish house. There is a knot-hole in the door between our room and that of the Turks, and it is usually occupied by an eye — either belonging to us or to one of the natives. So neither of us feels sure of much privacy. But the little daughter, Litfi, comes in every day with a gift of an omelette, or some native dish; and they are very attentive. There is an older daughter, too, who is supposed never to be seen by any man outside her family; but we sometimes see her through the knot-hole. At Gorica we live near the lake, eating with some *sous-officiers* and sleeping in our cars. The scenery is beautiful, and there are bears and wolves in the forests near by.

Sunday, May 20

ON returning from a trip to Zelova, I met a native bridal procession coming out of Koritza. In front were donkeys laden with brilliantly painted wooden trunks and boxes,

## SECTION TEN

---

and behind, on an ass, which her husband led, was the bride in a white veil. People thronged the streets everywhere to witness the ceremony. The couple cannot live together for two days, according to the custom. Marriage always takes place on a Sunday, and the festivities last a whole week. On the Monday the relatives, in a regular procession with music, go out to see the bride.

*Monday, May 21*

I TOOK a walk with the Albanian from Bridgeport, and met a deputation of old women on their way out to visit the bride of yesterday. They all carried black umbrellas and were accompanied by a girl beating on a drum.

### A NATIVE FUNERAL

*June 3*

IN the afternoon I went with Mac to police headquarters to see the results of the new order disarming all Albanian and Turkish civilians. They poured in all day with every sort of weapon, from modern Turkish rifles to bent and battered muzzle-loaders, thick with rust. We examined the pile of junk, and I brought away as souvenirs the sights of a Turkish rifle and a small dagger.

Afterwards a native funeral came along the street and we followed. Singing a mournful song, the tall-hatted priests led the way through the cemetery to the old church where there was an open casket in the middle of the floor, and we went in. All, including ourselves, held candles. After a long chant the coffin was taken out to the yard, but not until all the relatives had kissed the corpse. Hired mourners kissed it again and again by the graveside, weeping and wailing frantically all the while. The body was that of a woman not over thirty, but very ghastly to look at. After the final kissing, a cross was put on the mouth, the body was covered with cotton cloth — all except the nose — and the coffin was then lowered into a shallow grave, about three feet deep. The priest threw in olive oil, and the spectators each tossed in a

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

little earth. Finally a lid was put on the coffin and the grave filled up. Dry bread was given out at the gate of the church-yard. Every one seemed very hungry and many fought for it.

June 12

I GOT some Albanian kids to wash my car in exchange for some chewing-gum. We saw the Albanian Army marching downtown to-day. Its exploits are amusing. During one battle the only man killed was an Albanian captain who was quarrelling with another captain about who should ride the one horse. The Albanian Army came home for Easter, leaving the positions to the Boches, and the Senegalese "niggers" had to go out to save the town.

June 13

I WAS on call and made a trip to Kula Nora for three men suspected of typhus. In the afternoon I had another call to get a *blessé* from Voskop, a little town at the foot of the mountains toward Muskopole. None of our ambulances had been there before. The *blessé* turned out to be a Roumanian civilian who had been set upon by *komitadji*, or bandits, with knives, robbed of his money, and wounded ten times in the neck.

July 1

I MADE a trip to Zelova. If it's my last trip in good old 348, as it should be, I'm glad it was a pleasant one. The road is quite good now, except the "Biklista Bumps." I met thousands of ponies, asses, and goats, and three tortoises on the road.

HAMILTON LILLIE <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Cambridge University, England, and Harvard, '18; served in Sections Four and Ten from November, 1916, to November, 1917; subsequently became a Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Aviation Service. The above extracts are from his diary.

## II

### SALONICA AND ROADS TO ALBANIA

*Salonica, January 21*

WENT downtown to a mosque to see a dervish ceremony, which consisted of a group of about sixteen men, all kneeling in a circle and chanting a verse which they repeated about a hundred times; then shifting to some other verse for another hundred, while swaying their bodies from side to side. Later, they chanted to a kind of tom-tom, or drum, going faster and faster. They were singing dervishes. We were disappointed, as we had hoped to see the whirling, dancing variety.

*February 15*

GOT up quite late. We are on the side of the road in a kind of a ravine between two hills. On the right is a long, high ridge rising below us and coming to a summit opposite, and then rolling on beyond. It is a stony, gray, slaty hill, covered with a brown scrub. Halfway between us and it is a tiny little Serbian graveyard of about twenty wooden crosses, and right beside us is a single lonely grave of a man killed on this very spot by shell. All this country has been fought over many times. The big snow mountains in the distance, and the large, queer-shaped lake on the other side of us, make a very beautiful region, different from any I have ever seen. Every now and again we hear the rumble of heavy guns.

*February 16*

VERY cold on the tops of the mountains, but a wonderful view of the country. Florina is just visible in the distance, tucked against the snow-capped mountains about twenty miles across a broad, level valley. It is a funny little town, like the worst parts of Salonica. At night it is as dark as pitch, all the windows and doors being boarded up.



### TROUBLE WITH AEROPLANES

*Zemlak, February 24*

A FINE, clear day in this little village and every one expected some aeroplanes to fly over. Suckley made us move the cars all round so that one bomb would not blow them all up at once. A couple of planes did fly over, but no bombs were dropped. One Boche, however, turned his machine gun on some troops down the road, and one Frenchman got excited and fell off his horse; he was the only casualty. From camp it sounded like quite a little battle.

*March 9*

I LEFT camp for Soulim, where two of us are to be stationed for a few days. The road is an old Roman one, and a wonderful piece of engineering. It winds back and forth, zig-zagging. At the top, you suddenly get a fine view of Lake Presba, whose water is strikingly green and brown, with white herons on its surface making a curious contrast.

*March 10*

LEFT Soulim about 12.30, as everything was moving to Gorica. We made Gorica with some difficulty as the road is terrible. There we got two *malades* for Zemlak. We had quite a bit of trouble in getting over the pass, as it is worse going that way. We got stuck about six times, but finally arrived at Zemlak at 6 and had supper, and then started back for Gorica at 9.30. The moon was quite bright, and it was a marvellous night, the snow-capped mountains standing out like purest crystal while the cloud-shadows on them were most curious. One place on the road, where it runs on the side of the hill with the lake about two hundred feet directly below, is especially beautiful. We got to Gorica at 12 P.M., and went right to bed in the car. The attack starts to-morrow, and about the whole Section will be up in the morning.





FRENCH COLONIAL TROOPS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE  
MONASTIR FRONT



## SECTION TEN

---

### SHELLING BY THE AUSTRIANS

March 11

GOT up about 7. About ten of our cars were sent up to the front. We stopped when in sight of the enemy. One car went on beyond and was shelled; so we all had to stay quite far back. The "75's" and the "220's" started at 7 and kept at it all day long. The advance moved but slowly, as the Austrians had lots of ammunition. About noon, the wounded began coming up the road on mule-back.

March 13

WOKE up at 4, and took two *couchés* to Gorica, returning about 6. Loafed around until 10, when three of us went down the road to watch a "120" firing. We were about one hundred yards away when suddenly the Austrians opened up on it. Three or four shells fell quite near it, when, all of a sudden, a shell came in and lit within a yard of the gun and in the midst of the ammunition; there was a crash and a flash, and in the light we could see three figures thrashing around. We went back, got a car, and carried the men who were wounded across the field to a hastily constructed dressing-station. One man was dying — his head terribly burnt, a hole in his neck, a broken leg and arm. The other two were not so badly off.

About one o'clock, I took three *assis* to the hospital, and then got a little sleep. About 5.30 I left for Koritza with three *assis*; had no lights and the roads were very bad. To bed at Zemlak at midnight. It rained all night. Raining and drizzling when I woke up; started work on my car about 7. Lunch at Zemlak and left for Gorica at 12.30. Roads worst I have ever seen; they were like a boulevard before compared with what they now are.

### LONG HARD RUNS

March 16

STILL raining when I got up. Left for Zemlak with three *assis*. Roads pretty bad, but some of the worst places had

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

been fixed. Car ran poorly at first, and I had to change spark-plugs twice. At Zemlak we had to go on to Biklista; the road was terrible — worse than the mountains. Got stuck in a stream. Had a nice lunch at Biklista and started back. Got stuck in same stream with the car tilted so that the gas would n't run to the carburetor. After about an hour twenty-five Senegalese came along and pushed me out. Stayed at Zemlak for the night to bring up the *ravitaillement*. Got up at 6.30 and tried to start my car. The water in the gas-tank was at the bottom and had frozen. Had a terrible time; but finally got it started. Snowing all the time, and the road was difficult. Got to Gorica about noon and carried five *blessés* to Gorica *là-bas*. Up to the *poste* about 3.30, and made one trip with five *assis*. From then on until about 3 A.M. I made five trips. On one trip a man died on the stretcher beside the car, and another one died about ten minutes after I got to the hospital.

March 18

WOKE up about 9 and took one *couché* and three *assis* to Gorica. Came back for lunch and filled tank. An *avion* flew over, and when it was directly over my head, I saw him drop three bombs, which fell in an orchard, about two hundred yards from the road. Back to the *poste* and returned to the hospital with a *couché* and three *assis*. Worked on my car awhile and am now at the *poste* waiting my turn to go up. Went up with two *couchés* and returned. Back again with two more and got something to eat. Heard that Suckley, Dufour, Michel, and Senel were all hit by *avion* bombs.

### THE DEATH OF SUCKLEY

March 19

GOT up early this morning and went to the hospital with one *couché* and three *assis*. We heard the terrible news that Henry Suckley was dying. The aviator flew down the road from Zemlak and dropped four bombs. Henry

## SECTION TEN

fearlessly came to the door of the tent when the aeroplane was heard, and one of the bombs fell about fifteen yards from him, to the front and a little to the right. He was struck in the groin. Though terribly hurt, he was never unconscious, and was rushed to Koritz in an ambulance, where he stayed until he died the next morning. Several of the fellows were at Koritz all the time, and saw him continually during the day and night. He was conscious all the time, smoking and chatting cheerfully with the men. He kept asking why there were so many of the fellows bothering about him when they should all be up at the front doing their work. He died quietly the next morning, about nine o'clock, and was buried that afternoon with military honors. All of us at the front were unable to go to the funeral, for the work had to be carried on just the same as if he were alive, which was what he would have wished.

WILLIAM DENNISON SWAN, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard, '17; in the American Field Service from November, 1916, to August, 1917; subsequently became a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Field Artillery.





### III

#### LEAVING SALONICA

*Salonica, January 21*

VERY cold. Snow on surrounding hills. We have constructed stoves from gasoline cans. MacKenzie made an excellent one from a galvanized iron can. Have thrown the earth up around the bottom of the tent to keep the cold out and am comfortable now so long as the wood lasts. Stovepipes are protruding from all the tents and columns of black smoke belch forth. The orchestra, consisting of two mandolins, two guitars, flute, and violin, got together after supper and we had some lively music.

*January 25*

GREAT changes in temperature here. Boys went swimming in the bay again. The Packard *camion* section, that has been sharing the vacant lot with us, left this morning. A crowd of women had gathered waiting the moment when they could pounce upon the trash left there. It was a wild scramble and tussle for everything, even for bits of broken boxes. Four husky women would fight for an empty box, and the possession of an old home-made stovepipe was of more importance than a head of hair. Soon we saw that first possession meant nothing to the "might is right" "super-women." Here was the war all over again. The strong were snatching from the weak. They were amazed and indignant that we should do aught but look on and applaud their strength of arms. We interfered because we were for fair play — namely, first come, first served. Any good American would do the same. The old lady next door had better keep her three fat ducks at home.

*February 1*

WOODEN shoes have been issued to us. The old lady next door wants to know what has become of a duck. Only two quacking about this morning.

## SECTION TEN

---

*February 12*

UP at four o'clock; packed tents and burnt all rubbish. The women will be surprised and disappointed when they see we have gone and left no trash behind.

*February 14*

TO-NIGHT the ambulances are roosting here on the top of a steep hill, and this is how we got up this last big hill. When we saw it we knew we could not make the grade, so we stopped well back in order to make a run for it. But before making the attempt, we all walked up looking the road over and figuring out how we might best make it. Then we stationed ourselves at the places where we knew a push would be necessary, and signalled for a car to come on. A hundred yards from the top, it was necessary to go into first speed, which was good for about twenty yards and the rest of the distance it was push for all hands.

It is now 9.30 and I am writing in my car. The wind is howling outside and it is very cold. My ambulance is well made and closes up snugly, so with a lantern burning it is quite comfortable. Ellingston is on guard and one would know it is way below freezing by the sound of his feet upon the frozen ground.

### A VISIT FROM SECTION THREE

*February 17*

LOVERING HILL, Powell Fenton, and Bluethenthal came over from Monastir to see us. After lunch, Henry decided to send five ambulances on over into Albania and I was one of those chosen. We were told to travel light; so we carried only extra gasoline and personal effects. We started at 2 P.M. and reached the top of the pass at 11 P.M. Nine hours to go eleven miles! But the mud was ankle-deep, and near the top the deep ruts were frozen. We had to use the same tactics of pushing in relay. At one steep place several natives passed us and we made motions for assistance, when we received from one of them this reply,



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

in perfect English: "Christ a'mighty, I have already done a day's work." We laughed, passed around cigarettes and shook hands with our interpreter's friends. He had worked in Gloversville, New York. Before going to sleep I made tea and we opened sardines and the army rum bottle and talked of what Albania might look like.

*February 18*

AFTER lunch we stopped at the small village of Zemlak which is south of Lake Presba and lies to the north of and at the foot of a large *butte*. If we had searched all over Albania we could not have chosen a worse place to spend the next six weeks. Clouds continually hover about this mountain and we are seldom in sunshine, although we can look across at other villages basking in the sun and their white minarets beckoning to us.

*February 19*

MOST of the other boys arrived to-day. We pitched one tent over an old Turkish burial-ground. The headstones have disappeared, but the turf is good. Sunken places show where the graves are. I carried two wounded Frenchmen from Biklista to Bresnica.

*March 1*

BOB CLARK waked me up about four o'clock with, "Jim, the big tent must have fallen down; I hear them driving tent pegs." At seven we found to our great surprise four inches of snow. All this snow upon the tent had drawn the pegs and the boys had to get up and reset it. By noon there were seven inches of snow.

### AN ATTACK

*March (I think it is the 24th)*

THESE last two weeks have been hard, indeed, and it seems like a dream. During the ten days of the attack I made nine trips to Koritza and back, 74 miles, and ten trips to the *poste*, an easy 750 miles, over roads beyond

## SECTION TEN

---

description. Selden Senter made eleven trips over the mountain in those ten days. There were stretches of road through the woods that had been made by cutting out the brush and levelling the ground. Softened by the rains, the ammunition wagons, artillery, and mule-carts had cut in, making deep mud-holes; and into these the natives had thrown stones. There were other stretches in low places where the mud was knee-deep. Many times I had to carry stones and reconstruct a surface under my wheels.

We start over the mountain with our *blessés* about 7 in the morning and get back during the night — sometimes as late as 2 A.M. My greatest fear is that I may fall asleep at my wheel and crash down one of the many cliffs by the roadside. At one place the road skirts the lake, high above the water. We are often so fatigued with the strain and monotony of this unceasing grind that we fall asleep at the wheel, and run off the road. Recently, Gignoux ran over a high wall and his car turned upside down. Before I run past a dangerous stretch of road I stop my car, bathe my face in cold water, get down, and run up and down the road several times to convince myself that I am well awake. This fatigue of constant driving acts like a narcotic upon one. The mind becomes dull, and, though fully aware that I am going off the road, I am indifferent as to what follows. In this state of mind shadows along the road assume queer shapes and one is likely to see animals, men, and wagons that really do not exist.

### SUCKLEY KILLED

*March (I have lost track of days)*

WE are all broken up over Henry Suckley's death. He was one of the finest fellows I ever saw. Many of us were unable to see him before he died, or to attend his funeral. He was buried with full military honors and his remains lie in the Christian cemetery at Koritza, among many whom he came out to serve. I regret that he did not live

to see his efforts rewarded by the knowledge that we did the work that we came out to do. He was in constant fear that our cars could not stand the terrific strain of these awful roads, and yet during the attack we handled the wounded as fast as they were able to be moved and the *Médecin Chef* said it was doing almost the impossible.

Here are some details concerning Suckley's death. We had left our large tent (the one we ate in and the one we slept in), together with our kitchen car, and various impedimenta, back at the village of Zemlak, situated at the edge of a broad plain, and had come up here to the front with only our ambulances, bed-rolls, a few personal effects, and some pots and pans to cook with, intending to work from here. Zemlak is fully thirty miles back of the lines and Henry was down there looking after sundry details. It was about noon and he and Robert Wood, of Easthampton, Long Island, Joe Richardson, of Boston, the cook, his Albanian helper, and our Lieutenant's chauffeur, were standing about the camp watching the enemy aeroplanes fly overhead. At this moment, four bombs struck near by, the second one not more than twenty-five feet from the kitchen car, killing the Albanian instantly, wounding Henry mortally, and the cook and chauffeur in their legs. Joe Richardson was in the eating-tent and, on hearing the first bomb explode, threw himself on the ground, which probably saved his life. If Henry had done this, too, as he often urged us to do, he probably would have been saved. The shells exploded in rapid succession; then Joe got up and went to the door of the tent where Henry was lying, who said, "I am hit," or words to that effect. Thereupon Joe opened Henry's coat and saw at once that it was a very severe wound; so they put him on a stretcher and Robert Wood carried him to the best surgeon here. He was perfectly conscious and cool until that night. He died at eight o'clock the next morning and was buried by a Protestant clergyman with full military honors. Many of the high officials spoke, paying just tribute to his devotion to the work and love



CEMETERY NEAR KORITZA IN WHICH HENRY SUCKLEY, "CHEF" OF SECTION TEN, IS BURIED





## SECTION TEN

---

for France. Our French officer, Lieutenant Constant, put our feelings into words with moving simplicity and grace, saying:

Avant de donner sa vie au service de la France, Henry Suckley lui avait consacré ses forces morales, intellectuelles et physiques. Depuis deux ans aux armées françaises où il avait mérité la Croix de Guerre, il joignait aux plus hautes qualités du chef les humbles patiences du soldat. Il estimait que le meilleur moyen pour lui d'obtenir de ses hommes l'obéissance passive, c'était, en tout, de leur montrer l'exemple et il réussait admirablement. Je me souviens qu'un soir, après une très longue et très dure étape, par un temps de vent et de neige, pensant que la garde de la nuit serait très pénible aux hommes fatigués, il me demanda, lui le chef, à prendre la première faction. Comment après cela, les hommes auraient-ils pu se plaindre? Il vivait avec eux, au milieu d'eux et travaillait de ses mains avec eux tout en les commandant. C'est le meilleur de nous tous qui est tombé.

Sa mort surtout fut héroïque. Dès qu'il fut atteint il demanda qu'on s'occupât avant lui-même des autres blessés, alors qu'il était de beaucoup le plus durement touché. Mais il ne pensait pas, il n'a jamais pensé, à lui; une cigarette à la bouche, comme on l'emportait à l'hôpital, il encourageait ses camarades. Il n'a pensé qu'à son service et à ses hommes et une de ses rares paroles fut pour me demander si tout allait bien là-bas.

Nous lui devons toute notre reconnaissance; il est mort pour la France en montrant sur cette terre lointaine quelle est la hauteur et la noblesse d'un cœur américain.

### LIFE AND CUSTOMS IN ALBANIA

March 27

TO-DAY I took a much-needed hot bath and changed my underwear for the first time since the beginning of the attack. So you see how pressed for time we have been. When we were not working *en route*, we were giving our cars much-needed attention, such as oiling, greasing, tightening up loose nuts, etc.

April 1

THERE is so much to write of in this strange land and we have been so busy the last month that I am sure I have



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

overlooked many things of interest. For instance, we have moved to Koritza, quite a large place for this country, having about 18,000 inhabitants. It is very clean and orderly. We could not be in a healthier place, I am sure. We are at the foot of a line of mountains with a broad plain on the other three sides; so we get plenty of fresh air and water, the latter being from streams high up the mountain-sides. Snow still covers the mountaintops, but it will not last long with such weather as we have had yesterday and to-day, with every indication of continuing. It is really warm in the sun and very bright — distinctly an Arizona day. The sky is a wonderful blue, and the mountains vary in color from a light blue under the snow to all shades of purple in the foreground; and the colors keep changing throughout the day.

We are quartered on the second floor of a very "spooky" house. The absence of glass in the windows does not worry us at all, for we expect the dry season is at hand. Curtains are not necessary, for the female population turns away at the sight of a man. This shunning of men does not speak well for those who have been here before us. Or, perhaps it is because they do not like our looks. As for the French, they are always gallant with women.

A few of the people here are attired in the European dress, but the majority wear native costumes. The men work a bit, follow a plough drawn by oxen, do a little spading and picking and drive a small bunch of pack-animals, donkeys or Albanian ponies, and very small horses. The women work much harder than the men. Many of the female peasants go barefooted the year round, are very hardy, and age very quickly. Great numbers of them work on the roads, picking up stones from the fields and hills near by and carrying them to the roads to break. They all seem more like animals than human beings, as they never smile and look so much alike. The only life and merriment is confined to the small boys who do about what American kids do. They are at the

## SECTION TEN

---

stage where they throw their hats and caps in front of our cars just as boys used to do at home.

### MEDICAL AID FOR THE NATIVES

*April 10*

ON the way back from Zelova, I was stopped by several peasant women, who had a small girl to be taken to the doctor. Her leg was terribly swollen from the knee down, and she was in great pain. I placed the girl in my ambulance, but her old mother refused to get in, too, and ran alongside for some distance. Finally I stopped and she got in, for she preferred the dangers of an automobile to being separated from her daughter. At Biklista I hurried to the office of the French doctor, a charming man, who looked at the swelling and asked me what the old women had to say. The situation seemed hopeless, as I could not speak Bulgarian. Something had to be done, as the doctor wanted to know how long the girl had been ill and the cause of the trouble. It occurred to me that some one in Biklista might speak English; so I ran out in the Street and called out: "Is there any one here who knows English?" Thereupon a long, lanky Albanian, among the crowd who came to see what the American wanted, came up and said he spoke a little English. So the doctor, who knew only French, conversed with a woman who only spoke Bulgarian, by this method: the doctor put his questions in French, I asked the same question in English, the Albanian translated it into Greek, and the little girl, who spoke Greek as well as Bulgarian, would communicate it to her mother; and then back would come the reply in the same manner. In the end, the doctor found out what he wanted so that he could diagnose the case. I got an Albanian to procure a room for her as she will be there at least ten days. When the child came from under the influence of chloroform, she kissed my hand. This and the look she gave me amply repaid me for my trouble.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*Easter Sunday*

THE *Médecin Chef* gave us a formal dinner in honor of our entrance into the war. He is a charming man and desired to express his delight. We heard the news officially Saturday morning.

*April 12*

MADE another trip yesterday, and *en route* took our little girl to the surgeon to have her wound dressed. This is necessary, for the bone is exposed, a fearful-looking place. The other fellows are all interested in the case and some of us stop each day to see her. We shall try to bring her here where we can see that she gets proper attention.

### CAPTURING TWO GERMAN AVIATORS

*Gorica, April 22*

I AM up here doing my four days *poste* duty. This morning I had two German aviators land at my feet — a Lieutenant and a machine-gunner. America has been in the war only a few days; so I think I must be the first American to capture a Boche. I was alone in a large field near the lake when I saw the plane coming, descending all the while. Presently I heard the motor running badly; so I knew he was being compelled to land. He was making straight for this open space; so I got behind a small stump for protection. On he came, striking the ground not a hundred feet away from me.

The ground was rough, and his wheels getting into a ditch threw the plane forward, the propeller striking the earth and causing the plane to turn completely over on its back, throwing out the two aviators as if they were giant frogs. I walked toward the overturned plane, meeting the pilot coming toward me; whereupon I announced that they were my prisoners. He replied in better French than mine that he was well aware of the fact, his motor forcing it upon them. I took his picture with his flying-togs on, just as he landed. All the while the other German was occupied about the plane, and presently I saw him

## SECTION TEN

---

take a clumsy pistol and fire it, which was followed by a flare of smoke. Then I realized that he wished to burn the machine. But in this he did not succeed, and the plane was left in perfect condition, save for a broken propeller and a damaged strut or two. The pilot told me he had dropped his last two bombs in the lake when he found that he would have to land. These he, no doubt, was saving to drop on us, as was his custom each day. Presently I could hear the French soldiers coming on the run, and I expected to see them carry out their oft-repeated threats as to what they would do if ever a German machine came down there; but nothing of the kind happened, for they seemed interested to hear what we were talking about. This was probably the man who had killed Henry and two others. In the end, they were marched off to Headquarters.

### A VISIT TO THE TRENCHES

May 20

WE are getting terribly bored with no work to do — a fever patient every few days being the extent of our labor. Wakened as usual by the hum of "Fritz's" motor. He dropped four bombs, but did no damage. Bob Lester, Bob Clark, and I decided we would visit the front-line trenches up on the mountain; so we got a lunch from the cook and rode with Brace as far as the *poste*. We stopped at Regimental Headquarters where the Colonel granted our request to visit the most interesting points, and assigned one of his men, named Dard, to show us about. Before beginning our climb, we had a fine lunch with the non-coms, and I never enjoyed a meal more. It was served out under the trees, and was so well prepared that we could not recognize army rations.

After the meal, we climbed about fifteen hundred feet along the ground that the French had advanced over in March in deep snow, against machine-gun nests. We had so often had these positions pointed out to us by soldiers passing the *poste* that we were glad to see how they

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

looked in reality. Here on the top the Saxon troops had rushed to stop the furious advance of the French and had placed machine guns there, which brought the advance to a standstill. The stone walls, which took the place of trenches, were not more than one hundred and fifty feet apart, and between them lay dead Turks who had fallen in a futile attack six weeks before. This accounted for the smells, which we at first thought might come from dead horses, until we realized that no horses could get up there. The soldiers have built here attractive little stone houses. Perhaps during centuries to come lone sheep-herders, grazing flocks high up there, will wonder who the queer people were who lived so far from water.

*May 30*

BATCHELOR and I have visited a native mountain village, and were interested to see the women carding wool and operating a loom. They twist the wool into yarn while they walk to and from work. Most of the men are in the Bulgarian Army and the women do all the labor. They use a crude wooden plough drawn by cows. Corn and hay seem to be the principal crops — the latter being of a very inferior quality. All work for the French Army is paid for in bread.

JAMES W. HARLE, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; entered the Field Service in February, 1915, joining Section Two in April, and Section Ten in December, 1916; later served as a sergeant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are extracts from his Diary.



## IV

### ROADS VERSUS MACHINES

*Koritza, March 2, 1917*

ANY history of the Section's work in Albania would be imperfect without a reference to the roads, which is given in this paragraph from a letter of mine written to Paris Headquarters last month:

"I was very glad to get your note relative to the shipment of spare parts for our machines. No story that Brown could have told you can picture the state of the roads. Of four cars out the first day, three broke down with rear axle trouble, and now the springs are beginning to sag and what the future will give us, God only knows. One spring has gone already on the way here, and I expect others will go very soon. Hill can give us nothing, as he uses ten front and ten rear a month! You can get some idea of these roads when I tell you that our kitchen broke its rear axle and its coupling-hook the first day. We managed to make only fifty kilometres a day, running eight hours! I should add that these roads are dry and have not suffered from the winter. We have only been working two days, and have had five cars out of commission in that time, using up practically all our supply of spare parts. One French Ford-section has nineteen cars out of commission because of springs and axles. Out of 130 English Fords only four are running. And, believe me, we had some work getting up here. Six of us were ten hours crossing one pass of eleven miles, pushing every car part of the way."

HENRY M. SUCKLEY,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Rhinebeck, New York; Harvard, '10; was in Section Three from its formation in 1915; became *Chef* of Section Ten in December of 1916; killed while serving in Albania by an *avion* bomb.



## V

### THE STANFORD UNIT

THE Stanford Balkan Ambulance Unit was the second instalment of Section Ten in the Orient. Touring seemed to be the favorite pastime of the Unit, for in six short months the majority of the men "wandered" from the Stanford University campus in California, across America and the Atlantic to France, and from Bordeaux to Paris.

In Paris the Unit was offered the opportunity to go to the Balkans to replace men returning from Section Ten. We were increased by an addition of eight men from Section Fourteen and two from a third Stanford contingent. Carl A. Randau became *Chef*, and the trip to the unknown Albanian wilds began July 7, 1917. Along with fourteen men for Section Three, who were also going to the Balkans, the Unit was marked in traveling orders as "forty American aviators" that better accommodations might be extended along the trip. The French are clever at being kind.

Notable among the incidents *en route* was the "fig-feed" at the home of the American Consul in Livorno. There never were better figs than those in the Consul's garden when we arrived, and which were not there when we left. One hour of lightning sight-seeing in Rome, where an evening was made doubly enjoyable by the reception of the American Consul and the American colony. Next morning Mount Vesuvius obligingly belched out a cloud of smoke as we dragged by on the slow troop-train.

Salonica lived up to expectations with its harbor full of Allies' warships, with its soldiers of twenty-four nationalities flocking the streets and bazaars, with its minarets towering over the Turkish temples, and with its many narrow streets. We should have appreciated Salon-

## SECTION TEN

---

ica all the more had we foreseen the fire due to Turkish incendiaries, which destroyed the city a month later.

A night on a Greek train, packed among soldiers of all Allied varieties, brought us to Florina Station, near Monastir, whence we embarked in two Packard trucks for the trip over Pisadori Pass. Autos never ran over this pass until the war taught people new uses for them. Our first casualties occurred here — two of our men succumbing to Balkan unsanitary conditions, the beginning of the epidemic of sickness which ran through the Unit during its entire stay. Fortunately they went to the hospital by ones and twos, leaving sufficient men to run cars.

### TROOP-TRAINS AND PACKARDS — BEGINNING WORK

DESPITE a run-down and worn-out personnel, due to three weeks of troop-train travel and the bouncing over mountain roads, the arrival at the cantonment at Koritza found us ready for an immediate introduction to work, especially as the former section had left when it heard of our arrival at Salonica, only Kimberly Stuart, the *Chef*, remaining behind. So next morning found every car that could roll out on the roads carrying *malades* and *blessés*, and that morning began a rush of work which lasted until the Section was recalled to France eighty-four days later. During this time an average of twelve cars were kept on the road, making thirty to ninety-five kilometres apiece per day. There is no *en repos* in the Balkans. In the first three days of running out along the shores of Lake Presba from Gorica in Serbia to Koritza in Albania, crossing Macedonia on the way, the Section lived on excitement and the newness of the situation, and carried 269 men 5450 kilometres.

### FIGHTING IN ALBANIA

THEY had an old-style way of fighting down there in the Balkans. Trenches were not very practical except in a few of the valleys, for the warfare was from peak to peak.

Ambulancing there meant hauling the wounded and sick down from the mountains over roads that were formerly only meant for donkeys and ox-carts. Running out to Gorica you wound across the Koritza Valley, up a steep pass toward Monastir, along a mountain-ridge, and down along the shore of Lake Presba, with its pretty wooded island, once the seat of a Balkan Empire under the Bulgars. Looking across the water you saw the Boche side of the lake, and you could locate their positions on the slope opposite you. You were in just as plain sight of them as they were of you, which fact furnished fine copy for the letters home, though if you were honest you told, too, that the Boches had no guns that could reach you, and they probably would not have wasted any ammunition if they had had them, for it was hard to get ammunition up these Balkan peaks; so neither side wasted any. When they did fire, it was usually at strategic positions which both sides avoided.

The Gorica *poste* was a collection of mud huts and tents just out of range of Boche guns, but very easily located by aeroplanes, which may account for, but does not excuse, the fourteen different times the *poste* was bombed, despite the huge red crosses on the buildings and the grounds. One outpost was a little village up against a towering peak on which men fought, and the other was a tree on the road into Serbia, behind a hill which took all the punishment when there was firing going on, and down which men came straggling when sick or wounded — being either carried by *brancardiers* or on pack-mules. Around the range lay Podgoritz and Swezda, where the lines were nearer. Farther back was Zemlak, where Suckley, *Chef* of the former Unit, was killed by a German aero bomb.

We soon learned that, along the Albanian front, the Boche aviators were our most dangerous enemies. They had a habit of bombing Koritza every morning as regularly as clock-work, while the French aviators were away scouting over the Austrian lines. Our cantonment had



CROSSING THE SAKULEVO RIVER



ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK!





## SECTION TEN

---

lost all its windows in one of those raids, and every few days women and children were wounded or killed near our quarters. The staff car had its side full of holes.

### ROADS — MOSTLY BAD

PROBABLY our worst run was the Zelova with Russian evacuations. Zelova was fifty kilometres from the hospital at Koritza, over the bumpiest road an auto could travel, and the Russians were not good passengers. It was a daily occurrence for some machine in the convoy to break down, but it never remained broken more than one day at a time, thanks to the good work of the mechanics, Johnston, Massuttié, Villier, and Martin.

There was the Muskopole trip, across the valley and up the mountains over stones, bridges, and bumps sufficient to kill ordinary *blessés* and impassable to all four-wheeled vehicles except Fords and native ox-carts. Muskopole was in "No Man's Land," and was held by pro-French *Komitadjis*, or Albanian bandits, and by a few lonely Chinese sentries. The town itself was in ruins, having been systematically destroyed by the Turks, Bulgars, and pro-Austrian Albanians, along with practically the entire population. Muskopole used to be the Mecca of the Balkans, boasting over twenty churches with wonderful mosaics and fine metal-work. Now these ruined churches are filled with musty stacks of bones, each skeleton scrambled with the next one, and the only inhabitants are a few lingering natives who want to die among the remains of their relatives.

### AN ATTACK AND AN ADVANCE — THE ALBANIAN NAVY

ON September 5 Section Ten followed the Albanian offensive from Lake Malik to Lake Ochrida. In five days the attacking divisions drove the Boches back some fifty kilometres more than the schedule laid out for two weeks' operations. Section Ten had to move *postes* northward day and night every few hours to keep up with the



attack. An Austrian hospital one morning in Pogredec on Lake Ochrida was a French hospital in the evening — beds, instruments, buildings, long, thin German Red Crosses, and all. Once the ambulances got ahead of the attack and established a *poste* in front of the infantry and artillery, with only a few cavalry to keep it company in case the Boches stopped running. Nothing could stop the wild charges of the Moroccan *spahis* except the order of the French General to slow down until the food trains could catch up. Only pack-mules and Ford ambulances were able to follow the army over the pontoon bridges and the bad roads left by the Austrians. On the steep hill coming out of Pogredec from Lake Ochrida, the General happened one day to see Lieutenant Daniel Faure and *Chef* Carl A. Randau pushing an ambulance up the grade; so he ordered a dozen *poilus* to be stationed there to do nothing but this work. It was too steep even for Fords to climb without help. At a number of other places men had to be stationed to help machines through mud and bad places.

The success of the attack gave Section Ten two new cantonments, one at Lesnicha, where the hastily deserted headquarters of the Boche officers were turned over to the Unit, and another at Pogredec on Lake Ochrida. This latter cantonment was on a sandy shore, with a fine swimming-beach, of as pretty a mountain lake as can be found anywhere. Before the war the place was noted as a resort. Across the water was Ochrida, held by the Austrians, whence rafts armed with machine guns came out to worry the French. But the latter were more than masters of the naval situation with their two launches armed with cannon. These boats had been brought over the mountains on trucks and trains from Salonica and were manned by French sailors from the navy.

With no two weeks of work ever the same, life in the Balkans did not grow monotonous, largely because we were always busy. Thus, our *repos* consisted of coming in to the Koritza cantonment, where the men were always

## SECTION TEN

---

on call helping out the French ambulance service. The Unit averaged twelve cars on duty for eighty-four days without a break, and many times we had all twenty cars "rolling" up and down the mountains. In August, 2675 men were carried 40,506 kilometres. In September, 1779 men were carried 18,840 kilometres. The first twenty days of October saw 12,000 miles covered and some 800 men moved. At the end, three cars were always without wheels, owing to shortage of supplies, the wheels being switched from one machine to another as it went on duty.

Everywhere in the Balkans we encountered natives who spoke English and who had lived in America or had relatives who had been there. A large percentage of the Albanian population was of this sort, and all wanted to move to "the States" after the war. Their "Hullo, Johnny, how are you? What you want?" was the greeting everywhere, and their friendliness often came in handy when the Section wanted to buy something, or when we got lost on a strange road. John, the barber, became our authority for after-dinner discussions on Albanian life.

Food conditions in Albania were bad. People actually starved, and it was a common sight to see women and children picking up grains of corn and wheat from the filth of the gutter in front of the French supply headquarters. Sugar and flour could not be bought. The Army was forbidden to get grain from the natives, for the production of the soil was to be reserved for the civilian population which almost starved the year before. Army supplies were better, but were not sufficiently good to keep the men well even when they lived up to the rule of the doctors, "never eat anything not cooked an hour." Finally, Vern Caughell and Sedley Peck took over the cooking end of the Section's activities and we lived *à l'américaine* so far as style of cooking was concerned.

The valley in which the Section worked was, with the adjacent hills, known as the Republic of Koritza, and with the help of the French the natives were improving conditions considerably. Toward the end of our stay the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Albanians won to our good graces, though for a long time we considered them only a ragged, dirty, ignorant, and starving people who let the women do all the work while the men fought among themselves. The women were rough and ragged. Both sexes were hard to deal with as regards business, which could be conducted only after much Oriental bartering. But gradually we concluded that these were conditions brought on by over six years of war, in which the Albanians had been the victims of other Powers.

### THE FAMOUS BAZAAR

IN two ways the Section won for America immortal fame among the Albanians. The first was due to our bazaar. When the Section was ordered back to France, we were told to travel without much baggage. Having come down with a full winter equipment, we had much to dispose of, and an auction was started in the reception-room of our Koritza house. The word quickly passed around, and for a week the place was packed with bartering and bickering natives. They were eager to get anything American, having had no foreign goods for years, but insisted on the Oriental haggling before buying. Prices soared, but the goods sold.

The other cause of American renown was a farewell reception given us by the missionaries and Albanians — Mahometans and Christians alike, where more than half of the natives were of Turkish faith. They called for musical selections from the Americans when we had gathered in the missionary school. So the missionaries asked Aupperle for some lively airs, explaining that he was an artist at "rag music." Aupperle took the stool, and as the piano began to shake and "Oh, Johnny, oh, Johnny" thundered out, heads began to rise out of the crowd everywhere to see what he was doing to the piano. The Albanians were dumbfounded. Then the reception needed a fitting climax. Translated speeches on both sides did not seem ample. Finally some one had the happy

## SECTION TEN

---

thought to suggest a college yell, and we gave a "Sky-rocket" for Albania. When we had finished, they were too amazed for words, and it was several minutes before they could recover breath enough to clamor, "Do it again." We did, but even then they were not convinced that it was a human effort, and some of them visited the missionaries next morning to ask how it was that "the Americans cheered like a machine."

### LEAVING ALBANIA FOR GOOD

MONDAY, October 22, after barely three months of service, the Section bumped for the last time over the narrow, cobbled, crooked streets of Koritza in the White truck and saw for the last time the Republic of Koritza.

The Field Service sections in France were being taken over by the newly arrived American Army, but the United States War Department, we subsequently learned, had refused to adopt the Field Service sections in the Balkans, because the United States was as yet at war only with Germany, and there were no German troops engaged on the Balkan front. It was considered unneutral to have ambulance sections serving with troops opposed to the Austrian and Bulgarian armies. Hence we had been recalled to France. Under orders from the Field Service Headquarters we turned over all our cars, tools, spare parts, and equipment to the French formations with which we had been serving, and made a rather hasty departure.

After twice almost going over embankments as the lorry skidded on the muddy Pisadori Pass, we arrived at Florina Station, and soon were off again on our wandering, going first to Salonica now ruined and blackened, then down the Greek coast in a little Greek liner, to Athens, where we spent a week, and then up to Bralo in Central Greece, over the Parnassus Pass to Itca, and on the Gulf of Corinth, to Italy, and thence by train to France, following in the wake of the Italian reserves.

Paris seemed like home after the crude customs of

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Albania, and it was days before we could pass pastry-shops without entering them, or keep from staring blankly at every good-looking girl. A week after the arrival in Paris, we were in eight different branches of service, and Section Ten became only a fine memory of a wonderful five months of our lives.

FRANK J. TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Los Angeles, California; Stanford University; served with Section Ten in the Orient from July to November, 1917.





## VI

### AFTER THE BATTLE

· Koritza, Albania, September 21, 1917

FIGHTING on this front is very different from the species presented on the Western Front. There are few heavy guns and no massing even of *soixante-quinzes*. The French used only thirty, *tout-ensemble*, in this last "drive." The two factors which necessitate this difference are the great distance from supplies and the mountainous nature of the battle-front. All supplies from Salonica come on a little single track, then must be loaded on *camions*, the number of which is not sufficient to handle a great offensive; and from *camions* they must be again transferred to mules or two-wheeled wagons, on which they make another journey of some thirty kilometres to the front. The roads are not good, and lead over strenuous hills, making the *camion* part of the journey slow, tedious, and expensive.

The French attack occurred in the region of Lake Ochrida, the objective being to push the line forward to a point where it would interrupt the German supply artery from Durazzo to Monastir. Also the French wished to gain a road from Koritza to Monastir previously held by the Boche, and which wound around the northern end of Lake Presba. I was awakened at three the morning the attack started and was sent out to *poste*. I made the acquaintance of a French lieutenant, and we climbed up a hill to watch the sport. The French held one range of hills and the Austrians a parallel range of loftier mountains. Between was a green valley traversed by a small river. French batteries in the valley and others behind the French line of hills undertook to silence the Boche guns on the opposing mountains. We could see the flashes of the French battery in front of us in the valley, con-



cealed from the enemy by a high grove of trees, then hear the nervous, metallic crack of the guns, and then, straining our eyes, could see the sudden burst of dust as the shell broke near the enemy trench. The French maintained a superior fire throughout, silencing most of the enemy guns, and ripping up some of their trenches. Then the infantry charged up the hill and took it. It was certainly some feat, for the other day Aupperle and I climbed up to the German positions, taking our time, and we were certainly winded and tired when we finally gained the summit. However, I am not sure how much resistance they met with, as they were opposed by Czech-Bohemians who surrendered more than willingly in the majority of instances.

From the first attack on it was "duck soup" for the French, who chased them over a dozen succeeding ranges of hills. The major part of the fighting was done by Moroccan horsemen, a wonderful body of troops, riding splendid stallions, who preceded the infantry, driving back the Boches and charging the most stubborn heights on foot. A regiment of Senegalese from Africa — towering, jet-black negroes — also participated to a large and satisfactory extent.

Altogether the French pierced to a distance of some fifty-five kilometres, a distance, if gained on the Western Front, which would certainly make consternation reign in Berlin. We followed close behind the troops, preceding the *ravitaillement*, and driving over some of the damndest roads I have ever seen. In some places it was so steep that every one, even the *assis*, had to get out and walk. On one grade a squad of *brancardiers* was detailed to help us over; they have a regular camp there now, whence they sally forth at the despairing sounds of our approaching Fords.

The French now have a boat on Lake Ochrida, to clear the lake of hostile craft, part of the shores of which they at present occupy. It was put on a train at Salonica, and then trucked by *camion* over all sorts of roads the last

## SECTION TEN

---

hundred kilometres. It weighs nine tons, and has a 58 mm. cannon, and a couple of machine guns. No "Dutch" periscopes have as yet been sighted on the lake, but they are expected daily. The whole business makes quite a refreshing piece of news after all the scientific and precisely manipulated warfare of the Western Front.

They took a bunch of prisoners, most of whom come either from Dalmatia or Bohemia. We talked with a lot of them, and they all seemed sincerely glad to be captured, as they had had little to eat and showed that plainly by the emaciated condition of their bodies. Most of them cared not a bit which side won, and some seemed to be in sympathy with the cause of the Allies. A few, however, thought that the war would last a considerable time, and the Boches be finally victorious.

Almost all of the French *poilus* whom I carry and ask when they think the war will end, say "*Bienôt — trois mois.*" They are all very fed up with being so far away from "*la belle France.*"

BURNET C. WOHLFORD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Escondido, California; Stanford University, '18; in S.S.U. 10 of the Field Service, June, 1917, to November, 1917; served with the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.



T. L. Sefton with y/c photograph 11208.

## VII

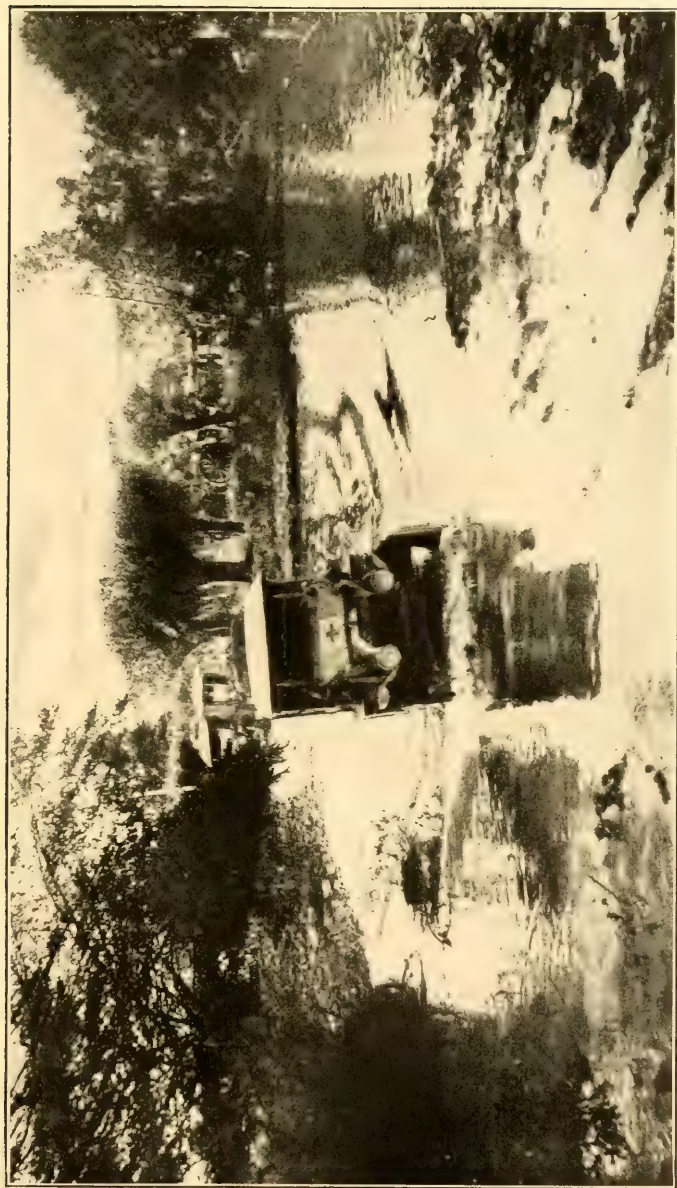
### MADE AN OFFICER

*Albania, August 8*

I AM now an officer, the *Sous-Chef* of the Section, and quite largely responsible for the actual condition of the Corps, so that with the fearful rush we stepped into, I've been kept humping. And so, since it is my duty to supervise the spare parts department and be in command of the French mechanics who repair the cars, the combination of circumstances has provided what I've long been longing for on this side — something real to do. The past ten days I have risen promptly at 6 A.M., worked all day with time out for meals, and knocked off at 8 P.M., reading from then until 9 or 10, when I have rolled under for the "eight hours."

Being an officer certainly has its advantages and its drawbacks. The chief of the latter is the being called on to order men I've "bummed" through college with as friends for two, three, or four years. I think it's as hard for them to obey, or rather acquiesce. The privileges are, primarily, better quarters, better accommodations, and better food when travelling, more opportunity for work, and a valet. Oh, yes, a valet! He's an Albanian who has been to America, and speaks English, Albanian, Greek, Serbian, and French. We call him "Rapide," because he is slow, and he helps in the kitchen outside of "office hours."

Carl Randau and I have for quarters a large room with five barred windows, in a one-story Albanian stone bungalow, quite near the Section's main quarters. The place is surrounded by a three-foot-thick, ten-foot-high stone wall, with a mediæval fortress gate, barred at night by eight-inch square oak timbers. All this because of bandits, you see. The walls and ceiling of the room are tinted an



"WHERE ROADS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN RIVER-BEDS"





## SECTION TEN

---

exquisite pink; the fireplace and mantel between the two front windows are a glowing Lake Tahoe blue; while the row of closets at the back of the room is a livid green. The door matches the fireplace. The floor is bare, with holes in it. We each have a folding iron bed brought from the French front, and over them we have draped mosquito nettings, completely encircling each bed and extending five feet above them. They look like posters. Each of us has unearthed a table, and these are already covered with the usual litter of books and papers and lamps. With the officership goes a big, ugly automatic, all loaded, to lay on the table against assault and as a paper-weight. On the whole, everything is O.K., and we have made ourselves quite comfortable here.

### FROM PITTSBURGH TO ALBANIA — BARTERING

*August 18*

RECENTLY I was sitting on my running-board waiting for my engine to cool after a steep hill, when along came a ballet-skirted Albanian clubbing a donkey. I was feeling "funny," so I called out in English, "Hello, Joe, what ye beating that donkey for?" And he came right back, "Hello!" And then admitted that he was from Pittsburgh, Pa., U.S.A. What a reversion! From Pittsburgh to beating a donkey across a lonely Albanian pass, the while clothed in that incongruous garb!

The Road is life! There's more music and religion in the Road, especially the Mountain Road, than in all the stone temples of the world.

*September 17*

I'M preparing to go to Koritza on the 1st and celebrate my twenty-first birthday. Such an unthought-of place for me to celebrate my majority! Still, I look at it as an omen of an interesting life. If I'm here now and I've seen what I have seen when I'm only twenty, what shall I not have seen and done when I'm fifty? It's a question and a promise, if only the war don't last too long to bring



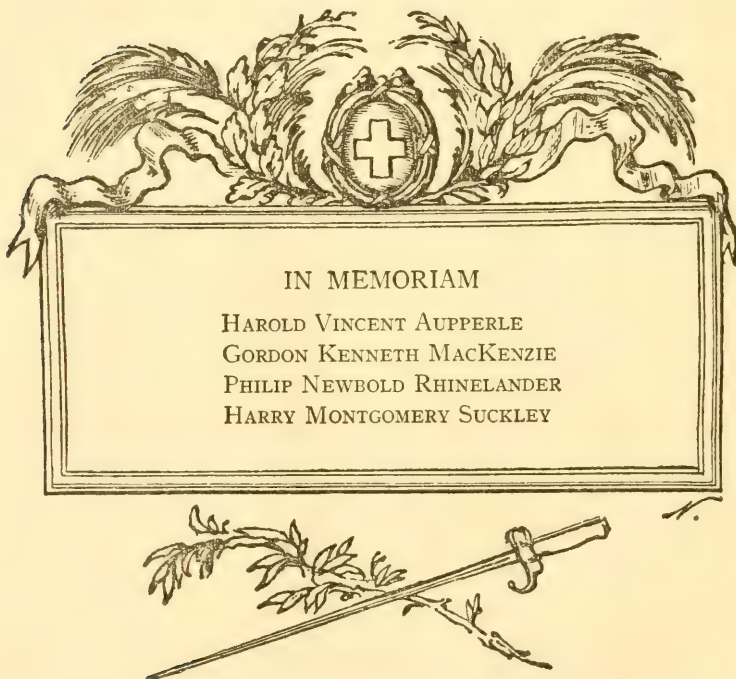
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

about a tragedy of lost ambitions and energies. If it lasts many years longer, that will be one of the tragedies — broken, dismayed youth.

WILLIAM J. LOSH <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of San Francisco; Stanford, '17; in the Field Service, Section Fourteen, March to June, 1917; Section Ten, July to November, 1917, as *Sous-Chef*; subsequently First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service, with the French Army. These are extracts from home letters.



## *Section Twelve*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. CROOM W. WALKER, JR.

II. JULIEN H. BRYAN

III. RALPH N. BARRETT

## SUMMARY

SECTION TWELVE left Paris on February 7, 1917, bound for Bar-le-Duc. It stopped first at Longeville, then at Vadelaincourt and Jubécourt. With Dombasle as its base, the Section worked Esnes and the Bois d'Avocourt. It was at the former place the Section first saw action. Twelve later worked in the Sainte-Ménéhould, Suippes, and Châlons sectors. It was at Vaux-Varennnes, its next and last move as Section Twelve, in a château located in a valley surrounded by the high hills of France, that it was taken over by the American Army, thereafter to be numbered Six-Thirty of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Twelve

I see them, men transfigured,  
As in a dream, dilate  
Fabulous with the Titan-throb  
Of battling Europe's fate;

For history's hushed before them,  
And legend flames afresh, —  
Verdun, the name of thunder,  
Is written on their flesh.

LAURENCE BINYON

### I

#### LEAVING RUE RAYNOUARD

THE big majority of the Section came over on the same boat, the *Espagne*, and landed in Bordeaux on January 17, 1917. We arrived in Paris on the 19th. Then began our initiation into the Field Service and our acquaintance with those never-to-be-forgotten French official papers that we all had to have and now keep as precious souvenirs of bureaucracy. We more or less wandered out to "21" and there began our service and career as ambulance men. For a while we loafed around, listening wide-eyed to the wondrous tales of the *permissionnaires*, putting Fords together, gathering enough equipment to go

to the North Pole, and spending every cent we could lay hands on. Finally came our assignment to a body to be known as Section Twelve and our introduction to our prospective *Chef*, Harry Iselin; whereupon we were shown our cars and got to work on them. Then came the farewell dinner, at which we were addressed by several prominent Frenchmen and our own chief Mr. Piatt Andrew. On February 8, we left rue Raynouard bright and early, with the good wishes of all, including Fisher, who had been "to the mat" with each of us in attempting to beat into our heads the whys and wherefores of a Ford.

Well, anyway, we got under way somehow or other, and our joys and troubles began. We managed to make our first stopping-place, Champigny, without any mishaps to speak of. But new cars were beginning to show off, and expert chauffeurs were beginning to be less boastful. Wheels would not steer and carburetors would not carburate, and drivers would not work, but argued the question in the middle of the road as to whether the actual complication was in the top or the differential.

Meanwhile our soft-voiced mechanic cussed and swore. We managed it, though, and arrived at Montmirail about 8 P.M., tired and cold. Strangely, and much to our surprise we had a wonderful meal cooked by our more-than-marvellous Andy. Then weary and sleepy, we crawled into a hay-loft for a good night's rest. Early the next morning we were on the way again, stopping at Sézanne for luncheon. The afternoon's journey was accomplished without mishap and we arrived at Sommesous, where we spent the night in a barn with the horses and pigs.

### A STAY AT LONGEVILLE — VERDUN AND ESNES

By the next noon we made Vitry-le-François, had lunch, and arrived at Longeville, by way of Bar-le-Duc, about eight that night, again cold, tired, and hungry, but still enthusiastic. All ears were cocked for guns: for some of us poor benighted innocents thought we were at the front.

In Longeville we spent many speculative days, were

## SECTION TWELVE

---

finally assigned to a division, where we met that never-to-be-forgotten Frenchman, Dr. Rolland, the *Médecin Chef* of the 132d, and on the morning of February 28, the Division at length started for the front. We hesitated at Vadelaincourt, and at last arrived at Jubécourt, from which, on March 14, we left for Dombasle-en-Argonne, where we relieved Section One, and commenced our work near the historical Hill 304 and Mort Homme, a region just about as alive with batteries as any I have ever seen in France.

Later we went out to look over that wonderful little spot, our *poste de secours* at Esnes. Over the top of the hill, above Béthelainville, we blithely rolled; we even began to descend, every one agreeing that it was a wonderful sight and feeling quite brave. However, Montzéville came into view, and with it the shells began to fall. We got through all right, though, and started for Esnes. This road from Montzéville to Esnes ran for some three kilometres parallel with and in plain sight of the trenches. Incidentally it was practically the only means of communication with our hill, and consequently all troops, supplies, artillery, ammunition, and so on passed over said route. One knows too well what happens on that kind of a road. Suffice it to say that many a night we were scared stiff as we rolled over it, praying with all our souls that our well-beloved *voiture* would keep chugging on all four pegs. Lord! the memories of that road! Flying artillery with the caisson hitting both sides of the road at once; tired, dusty soldiers, *ravitaillement* wagons, and those damned little donkeys, carrying ammunition, which simply would not get out of the way; everywhere wreckage, broken wagons, overturned guns, with always shells whipping through the air.

Well, we arrived at Dombasle on the 14th and got settled nicely in about the most comfortable and likable cantonment we ever had, then Section One rolled out and we started to work. The first cars went out to the *postes* and came back with wonderful tales of our good fortune



in being attached to a division with such wonderful *bran-cardiers*. And right here I want to express our thanks to our friends, the little priest, Bouvier, and the ever-present and cheerful cyclist and photographer, Bardeinni, who did so much in different ways to make pleasant our life at the front. Everything, in fact, went along smoothly for a few days; then the very devil broke loose.

### AN ATTACK — ALL CARS ROLLING

ABOUT four or five o'clock on one Sunday afternoon, Houston<sup>1</sup> and McLane were, I believe, at Esnes, while I was at Montzéville, the halfway *poste*. The other boys were having just about as hard a time, if not worse, at other *postes*. Along about four a terrible *barrage* started, and some thirty minutes later Houston stuck his head in the *abri* door at Montzéville and gave me the word to go up to Esnes. On the way up, I passed McLane with a load and in a few minutes was on my way back myself. From then on, for a long period of hours, it was just one continual roll, roll, roll. Things were happening thick and fast; night came on, and still there was no let-up. Cars began to get into trouble, the traffic was awful, and still faster and faster the *blessés* came pouring in.

All credit must be given to our *Chef*, who, although a new man, gave a wonderful example of command and direction. He, too, had the hard job of keeping us all up and going, notwithstanding the excited state we were in. How a man could keep awake as long as he did without going under has always been a mystery to me. Then there was the incident when the cars, first rolling out to Esnes and things getting pretty hot, were met by the little priest with these words, "Well, I knew you boys would come, anyway." One can imagine how these words affected us and how we worked after that. Later, by the way, one of the boys told about being in his little cubby-

<sup>1</sup> Henry H. Houston, 2d, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; University of Pennsylvania; who after America entered the war, became a Lieutenant in the U.S. Field Artillery and was killed in August, 1918.



THE CHÂTEAU OF ESNES "POSTE." BEHIND IT LIES HILL 304



CAMOUFLAGE ON THE ESNES ROAD JUST BEFORE ENTERING  
MONTZÉVILLE. MORT HOMME IS IN THE DISTANCE



## SECTION TWELVE

---

hole in the *abri* and hearing, early one morning, one of the priests offering a prayer. He prayed for the soldiers, for the Allies, for the officers, for France and all the stricken and wounded, and lastly he said something that made this boy prick up his ears: "And for the young American volunteers who have come to us of their own free will from that great nation across the seas, who daily and gladly risk their lives in order to ease the suffering and do, what they say, is just their little part, — may the good God watch over and protect these and bless them as France thanks them. Amen." This prayer was spoken in French and without any idea that it was being overheard. This was the sort of thing that made the Section what it was in all its future work. By the 20th the attack was over and things became more or less normal, though there was plenty of work always at that particular part of the line.

### WHEN AMERICA DECLARED WAR

THEN we woke up one morning about April 6, 1917, and learned that the United States had declared war on Germany. Never were we happier and never were we treated better or welcomed with more enthusiasm than when we carried the news out to the front. Bottles of wine were unearthed, and we were patted on the back until we felt as though we ourselves had been responsible for the declaration. To cap the climax we were informed at this moment that five of our number had received the *Croix de Guerre* for the work done during the attack of the 18th to the 20th. These men were singled out for distinction, but there was not one in the Section who did not work hard and well during those three terrible days.

On April 12 our Division left the trenches and we were again relieved by Section One. We lined our cars up alongside of the road, all loaded and ready to start, and Section One rolled in amid much tooting of horns and shouting, again taking its old place in the line. We got our convoy under way sadly, for we had spent many happy days in

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

the little old knocked-down and kicked-about village of Dombasle.

We went with our Division as far as Senard, where, after having made camp and expecting to stay *en repos* for a while, we were suddenly ordered up and were on our way again in thirty minutes' time. We were transferred from our old Division to the 71st, much to our sorrow, for we had learned to love and respect our comrades, who had gone into line with us ninety-five per cent strong and had come out with only about fifty per cent left.

All left the 132d Division with regret, for we were much liked there, as this official farewell from the *Médecin Chef*, Dr. Rolland, testifies: "On quitting us, Section Twelve leaves behind it a feeling of unanimous regret among all the *brancardiers* of the Division. Coming from a very distant land to share in the defence of a good cause and lend their aid to our wounded, these friends of France displayed from the very start the finest qualities. Scarcely a month ago they knew nothing of the dangers of war, and without any previous preparation, in a most dangerous sector, and at a most critical period, they took up their new work in a fine spirit of courage and devotion, thereby personifying the splendid characteristics of their great nation. In a few days they inscribed their names on the honor roll of their Division. The *Médecin Chef* cannot let you depart without thanking you warmly for your aid on all occasions and without expressing his regret at being thus separated from such worthy comrades in this struggle."

Changes in the personnel now occurred. Second Lieutenant Bayard was called away and replaced by Lieutenant René Posselle, under whom it was our good fortune to work thereafter.

### THE ARGONNE

FROM Senard we went to Sainte-Ménéhould, where we found our new Division in line and where our work was rather quiet, and we learned to know the villagers and



## SECTION TWELVE

---

were met by the utmost courtesy and consideration on the part of the French soldiers and officers. Here we spent about a month, having gained additions to our family in the persons of Bradley, Sinclair, and a few others. About this time, too, Houston and Dunham left us for the school at Meaux, subsequently becoming *chefs* of motor transport sections, while our *Chef*, Iselin, went also to the same place. Ray Coan was appointed *Chef* and Alan McLane *Sous-Chef*. Here we had a wonderful party with Section Thirteen that had just come down from the lines with an army citation to its credit, which event, of course, had to be celebrated.

From Sainte-Ménéhould we went to Billy-le-Grand, where we spent two or three days, and then to Recy, near Châlons-sur-Marne, where we stayed *en repos* for about a month, during which period we had little else to do but play cards, fight, eat, sleep, and generally enjoy ourselves. Along about this time the Section began to break up badly. Benney<sup>1</sup> went into French Aviation, where he was subsequently killed at the front. He, with Harry Craig<sup>2</sup> and Waller Harrison,<sup>3</sup> who were subsequently killed in the American Aviation Service, and Henry Houston, who was later killed in the Artillery, were the only members of the original Section to make, so far as is known, the final sacrifice. We render them all due honor, and salute them as comrades who never faltered in their duty and who were over-eager to accept service of any kind. They went to their deaths as men should,

<sup>1</sup> Philip Phillips Benney, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; joined the Field Service in January, 1917; served with Section Twelve until July, 1917; subsequently entered the French Aviation Service and was killed in an air battle in February, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Worthington Craig, of Cleveland, Ohio; University of Wisconsin, '19; went to the front with Section Twelve, remaining with it until July, 1917; he was later in American Aviation and was killed in action in August, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> Waller Lisle Harrison, Junior, of Lebanon, Kentucky; Oberlin, '19; joined the Field Service in February, 1917, and served in Sections Twelve and Three until November, 1917; subsequently joined the U.S. Aviation Service and was killed in an accident in October, 1918.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

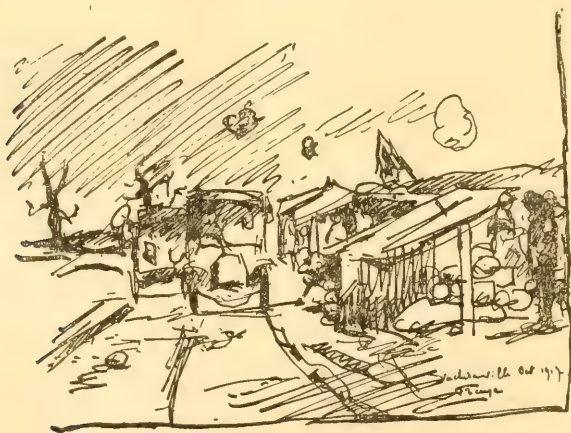
---

serving their country to the last moment. A little later Faith left us for the same service, while Tenney, Harrison, and Sinclair wended their way to the Orient to enter the sections which had gone down there, where were already two of our former number, Kelleher and Chauvenet. A little later Croom Walker took charge of a new section going to the front. Finally, the 8th of July arrived, the first period of enlistment was up, and when the Section made its next move very few were left of the original members.

From Recy, the Section went to Suippes, in the Champagne district, where it stayed for a while and then shifted over toward Reims. There it migrated around from village to village, finally landing in the little hamlet of Vaux-Varennnes, where the recruiting officers of the United States Army found it, and old Twelve of the American Field Service passed out of existence. Gone but, we are sure, not forgotten.

CROOM W. WALKER, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Chicago, Illinois; University of Virginia; joined Section Twelve of the Field Service in January, 1917; subsequently a First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## II

### THE FAREWELL DINNER — EN ROUTE

ONE of the finest speeches I have ever heard was given at our farewell dinner in 21 rue Raynouard by M. Hugues Le Roux, a famous French journalist and adventurer. He told us in almost perfect English how he had lost his only son early in the war, and he bravely described how that one had died and how he had barely managed to get to the bedside and hear the story from the boy's own lips before the latter passed away. He showed us why the work of the Field Service meant so much to him, because his boy when wounded had been left for days at the front on account of the insufficiency of the ambulances; and he made every man who had come from a mere desire for adventure, feel that it was really his duty to help France. Among the others who gave stirring speeches at the dinner were Mr. Andrew, and Mr. Frank H. Simonds, the well-known war correspondent.

*Longeville, Monday, February 14, 1917*

THERE was no room for us in Bar-le-Duc Saturday, and we had to push on to this little place where we slept in an old barn. But the close atmosphere drove us to our cars. I have made a regular little cabin out of mine. A good-sized bundle of straw, spread over the floor of the car, makes a fine mattress and for my heating and lighting system I have two kerosene lanterns. I am writing now sitting up in bed with my mackinaw on, since the heaters are not always too efficient. Pretty soon it will become stuffy, and then I shall throw back the canvas flap and the side windows and go to sleep.

*Longeville, February 26*

ON Thursday we had our first evacuation work. At Hairoville we picked up two *assis* and a *couché*. The

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

latter was in bad shape, and we had to drive back very carefully. We dropped all three cases at the big hospital in Bar, and then speeded home by the canal road.

### INCIDENTS AT THE FRONT

*Jubécourt, March 8*

I HAVE just returned from the regular nightly rat hunt. It is a pastime not very well known in America, but very popular here at the front. Every evening we collect our clubs and flashlights and raid an old barn near the river. Two or three of us usually rush in together, flash our lights about until we spot a rat, and then fall upon him with our sticks. It takes a good clean shot to kill, and we consider ourselves lucky if we get two or three in an evening.

*Inside "Shenickadaydy," Jubécourt, March 11*

THE General commanding our Division passed through the village this afternoon and reviewed the Section. Our orders were to stand motionless beside our cars and look straight ahead. But the General was a good-natured old fellow and spoke to several of the men as he passed, instead of marching formally by, funeral fashion.

*Dombasle-en-Argonne, St. Patrick's Day, 1917*

WITH the exception of a few road-menders, we are the sole occupants of the place. The peasants were all forced to flee after the shelling. Yesterday late in the afternoon I went with Craig to learn the road. Immediately upon leaving the village we came into plain sight of the trenches. I experienced the same shivery feeling here which one often has at home before getting up to make a speech in school. You try to tell yourself everything is all right, but still you seem to quiver all over. However, from the glances I stole at Craig now and then, I knew that he was just as worked up as I was. This idea seemed to cheer me immensely, and I felt much more at ease afterwards. I wonder why this should be so!

## SECTION TWELVE

---

*In the abri of the poste de secours at Esnes, March 20*

A LITTLE after noon on Sunday the heaviest bombardment we have yet heard started. I was given the Esnes run, the one I had made with Craig, and where I am now, waiting until a full load of *blessés* arrives. Finally I managed to get to the château and found three *grands blessés* waiting for me outside. I drove very slowly and carefully on my return trip, but sometimes I struck a bad hole which I had n't seen and the poor fellows moaned and shrieked pathetically. But finally I managed to get them into Dombasle. Then I went back to Esnes again for more, and kept on working until four o'clock the next afternoon. I did n't sleep for thirty-five hours, and some of the men, those who had been on duty before, went for four or five hours more than this. The result of our two days' work, ending Tuesday night, was 377 wounded carried a total distance of 10,000 kilometres, which, the crowded condition of the roads being taken into account, was no small achievement.

*Dombasle, March 24*

I CRAWLED into my blankets here at three o'clock this morning. They sent me out about ten last evening on a special call to *Poste Two*. I had three runs down to Ville with some *blessés* from a German *coup de main*, and this kept me going for some time. Fortunately there was a full moon or I should have had a terrible time in the woods. "Barney" Faith and I laid in a supply of wood this afternoon which ought to last us a month. But it is still pretty cold, and Bradley and Cook keep the fireplace so well filled up that we have to have two or three cords on hand all the time. We keep it stacked up in the corner where the piano used to be. The two of us ran my ambulance down the street to the wreck of an old mansion, filled the back chock full of banister pickets, assorted furniture, and wainscoting which we tore from the walls, and carried it back to our one-room apartment on the hill.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*Dombasle, March 28*

CHAUVENET has just come in from *Poste Two*. On his way out a "210" landed in the middle of the road just in front of him, and a great piece of steel tore through the top of his car not ten inches from his head, and dropped into the back of the ambulance. He did not know that the car had been touched until half an hour later, for he was so stunned by the force of the explosion, and so overcome by the shell-gasses through which he was forced to ride, that he barely got out alive. Every one is envious and wishes that it had happened to him — at least they say so.

### UN COUCHÉ GRAVE

*Dombasle, March 30*

THURSDAY night the *blessés* from the morning attack began to pile in at Esnes. I went on at eight o'clock as a reserve. The first time down I had one *couché* who could n't stand the pain. He almost drove me crazy with his shrieking and yells of "For God's sake, stop!" And several times when I happened to hit, accidentally, a shell-hole or a log, he actually rose up in his agony and pounded with his bare fists upon the wall of the ambulance. But I knew I could n't help him by stopping, and I felt that I might save his life if I hurried. After I got out of Montzéville, he quieted down, and I supposed this was because the road was so much smoother. But not until I stopped in front of the hospital at Ville did I learn the truth. The poor fellow had died on the road!

*In the abri at Poste Two, April 6*

At supper to-night the good news came, which we, and especially the Frenchmen, have been waiting to hear for months — the United States had declared war on Germany. One of the *brancardiers* returning from his furlough broke the news to us. We were all below in the *abri* when he came rushing down the muddy stairs and shouted to us what had happened. And each one of those simple *poilus* wrung my hand.





"POLLUS" OF TO-MORROW AND SOME OF THEIR AMERICAN FRIENDS WATCHING A BATTLE IN THE SKY



## SECTION TWELVE

---

### A CANTONMENT — AND A HOME

*Dombasle, April 13*

BENNEY and I were talking before the fire in his room to-day and Gilmore was attempting to make hot chocolate, when a knock came at the door. He yelled, "*Entrez,*" and, as the door slowly opened, we saw an old French couple standing on the threshold. This had been their home six months before, and now they had returned to look upon the wreckage. The woman wept when she saw the shell-hole through the ceiling, the broken furniture which we were burning, and the heap of old family treasures lying in one corner. We said nothing; we could n't say anything; but as they departed sadly, the man muttered, "It is not very nice, but after the war we will . . ." and we heard no more. Benney and I were silent, and Gilmore forgot about his cocoa for a few minutes. It had never occurred to us before, when we tore a ruined house to pieces for firewood, and carted off all the old books and ornaments for souvenirs, that people like these actually lived in the houses, or would ever return.

*Abri at Ferme des Wacques, July 1*

TO-DAY a young *aspirant* named Lucot took me around to the officers' *abri* and introduced me to his Captain and two Lieutenants, who invited me in to dinner. At dessert they told me they wanted some bright American girls for their *marraines*. So I wrote down the names and addresses of four of my friends at home who, I thought, would be willing to correspond with them. Then I described each one in turn and let each officer pick the one he wanted. It was very funny the way they debated about the girls. They decided that Lucot should take the youngest, who was very intelligent and quite small, because he also was young and small, although he did n't come up to the intelligence standard. The Captain preferred the tall and sedate brunette, because his grandmother was tall and sedate. The Lieutenants had a terrible dispute over the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

remaining two, one of whom was a marvellous dancer and the other very beautiful. At last they ended the argument by throwing up a two-franc piece and calling the turn of the coin.

*Ferme de Piémont, July 9*

It's a true saying that a Ford will run anywhere you take it. Frutiger<sup>1</sup> ran his machine into a tree on the Suippes road; but instead of climbing it, as the Ford joke-book would have it, the car bounded over to the opposite side of the road and lay there for several minutes on its back with the rear wheels spinning around at a great rate, before he was able to shut off the motor. Then he waited until a couple of Frenchmen came along and with their help turned it right side up again. After this he thanked them and rode off as though nothing had happened.

*My last day with good old Section Twelve — July 11, 1917*

I LEFT the Section for good to-day. I am going home. I'd a thousand times rather stay in France until the war is over, but the family does n't agree with me. Therefore, I must go home to argue it out. Princeton opens in September and I'll be there with the rest. But next fall it will be France again. I have finished saying good-bye to the fellows. As for old 464, I patted her radiator in a last fond caress and gave her a final drink of water five minutes ago. Dear old "Shen-ick-a-day-dy," as the *poilus* call her.

JULIEN H. BRYAN<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Raymond Frutiger of Morris, Pennsylvania; served with Section Twelve from June to August, 1917; subsequently entered the R.O.T.C. where he died at Camp Colt, Gettysburg on April 19, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Of Titusville, Pennsylvania; Princeton, '21; entered the Field Service in January, 1917; served with Section Twelve until July. For his book, *Ambulance 464*, see the Bibliography in vol. III.

### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

IN September, 1917, and in October, 1917, the enlisting officers of the American Army visited the Section at Vaux Varennes (north of Reims). About the 15th of October, the Section moved *en repos* to Ablois Saint-Martin, near Épernay, where *Chef* R. Coan was commissioned a First Lieutenant. November 13 found us for the second time at Vaux Varennes with no more war for our delight than had formerly been the case. In early December, *Chef* Coan was called to Paris to be replaced by Lieutenant Fisher, who previously had had charge of the training school at May-en-Multien. My diary depicts great disgust of the Section at the introduction of American Army rules and regulations. The banishment of trunks, the adoption of the ill-fitting American uniform, combined with the cold winter of suffering, did not permit us to remain long in a good frame of mind. There was very little work in the sector.

On February 4, Lieutenant Fisher was replaced by Lieutenant Rogers. In the latter part of February, we moved to Prouilly for *repos* again, but on March 7, we left to return to Saint-Martin for the ultimate purpose of changing our division and receiving a new allotment of cars. On March 13 and 14 the change of cars was completed.

On March 27, we received orders to leave Saint-Martin immediately and go to Meaux. The 5th Army divisions were being rushed north to aid in repulsing the big German drive on the Somme. We left Saint-Martin at six in the evening, ran an all-night convoy through Montmirail and La Ferté. Our first stop was early the next morning in Saint-Jean-les-deux-Jumeaux, outside Meaux by a few kilometres. At seven that night we received orders to proceed to Pont Sainte-Maxence, departing at once. During this convoy through Meaux, Senlis, and on to Pont Sainte-Maxence we began to get a glimpse of conditions in a big retreat. On Easter evening we left Pont Sainte-Maxence for an eighty-kilometre drive to Crèvecœur-le-Grand, north of Beauvais.

While waiting for further orders we cantoned in Marseille-Petit, and on April 4 orders came to go to Essertaux, about midway between Amiens and Breteuil. In the sector we had rather difficult work, all of us being kept busy continually. The *Médecin Divisionnaire* of the 127th rewarded us by "*Une Cita-*



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*tion à l'Ordre du Jour.*" On April 11, we came again to Marseille-le-Petit for an indefinite stay, not being attached to one particular division, but serving with any which needed our aid. On April 23, orders came to move to Rumigny to aid in the defensive in the Bois de Hangard. Upon arrival in Rumigny, we were posted to Dury, thence to the Asile d'Aliénés, outside Amiens. Nothing can better describe the affair of Amiens than what I wrote on the spot.

"April 24. Berteaucourt and Domart. Called out on service in the early morning and reported at the *G.B.D.* of the 131<sup>e</sup> *D.I.* to assist S.S.U. 575 in their work. Little idea could we have had of the tremendous work we were going to do. Eight cars were wrecked in the attack. At Domart yesterday morning, Charles Livermore was instantly killed, while going from the *abri* to prepare for a trip. The 140<sup>e</sup> *D.I.* called on us for aid to-day, necessitating five cars on service near Villers-Bretonneux."

On May 4, we are back again in Marseille-le-Petit, sobered by the tragedy through which we have just come. We leave tomorrow for the front, and henceforth we are to be attached to the 60<sup>e</sup> *D.I.*

On May 9, we relieved English Section 10 at Gannes, a little village directly in front of Montdidier. Here we had excellent accommodations, but work was continuous. The First Division (American) was on our immediate left.

In July, Lieutenant Rogers was replaced by Lieutenant H. G. Ford. In early August, a consciousness that something important was about to happen in our sector came over us, causing us all to prepare for any eventualities.

On August 10, we were the first American military organization to enter the city of Montdidier after the German occupation. August 11 found us in Faverolles, on the eastern side of Montdidier, with our outposts at Laboissière, Fescamps, and stone quarries indiscriminately scattered about the countryside. Our stay in this locality was featured by heavy, consistent work, and by annoyance from the retreating enemy, who tried to make the way as difficult as possible for the advancing Allies. On August 30, we were in Fignières for a day, and then moved back to the city of Montdidier for a *repos*. However, we did not stay there long, for on September 7, we arrived in Laboissière once again. Later, we moved to Avricourt, thus keeping up as rapidly as possible with the advance. Avricourt was situated midway on the Grand Route between Roye-sur-Avre and Noyon. While here, we worked outposts at Beaulieu-les-Fontaines and the Canal du Nord. Early on the morning of the

## SECTION TWELVE

---

8th of September, we entered Frétoy-le-Château, on the eastern side of the Canal du Nord, having to cross the field and cross the canal almost in its bed. *Postes* were changing continually, and to a man the Section was busy working irrespective of time, food, or weather.

Soon after arriving in Avricourt, we moved our cantonment to Frétoy-le-Château, to stay one night or so, then moving on to Villeselve. While at these places, our regiments captured Nesle, Ham, and Guiscard. From Villeselve we quickly moved to Cugny, not far from the Canal Crozart, whence we could see Saint-Quentin. Here we discovered one of the emplacements of the "Gros Berthas" which did the long-distance firing.

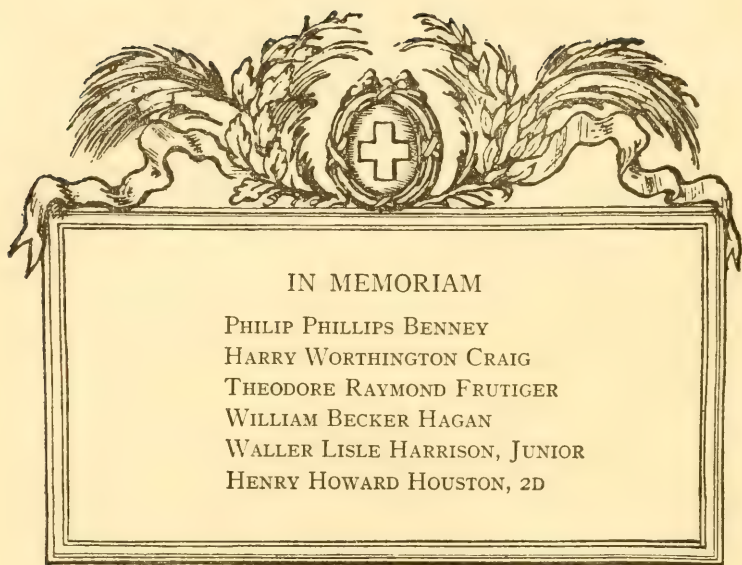
Cugny remained our cantonment for a much longer time than we really had expected. Outposts were advancing rapidly by demi-kilometres until we were well up to the Hindenburg line. Following Cugny the Section had a rapid succession of cantonments, at Montescourt, Essigny-le-Grand, and Marcy, beyond Saint-Quentin on the main road to Guise. Here, after our gallant 60<sup>e</sup> D.I. had crossed the Oise and had maintained their positions there, we were relieved to be sent to the Vosges for a rest.

Not long after our arrival in Saint-Dié came news of the Armistice. Orders were immediately forthcoming for us to move into Alsace, which we did about the 15th and 17th of November. Though this convoy was of not a long distance, it took us several days to accomplish it, due to the technicalities of the German withdrawal from Alsatian soil. Passing through Provenchères and Saales, we made our first stop at Ville (Veiler). From there we went to Barr the next day, and two days following our arrival in Barr, on to Erstein-Schaeffersheim, twenty kilometres south of Strasbourg.

In the post-Armistice months the length and breadth of Alsace was ours to re-discover, of which opportunity we eagerly availed ourselves. December, January, and February passed for us in the rural community of Schaeffersheim. February brought vague rumors of going home, and finally we began our last trip. Early one morning, the 28th of February, we left Strasbourg for Paris by way of Saverne, Sarrebourg, Avricourt, Lunéville, Saint-Nicolas-du-Port, Nancy, Toul, Void, Ligny-en-Barrois, Saint-Dizier, Vitry-le-François, Châlons-sur-Marne, Épernay, La Ferté, and Meaux.

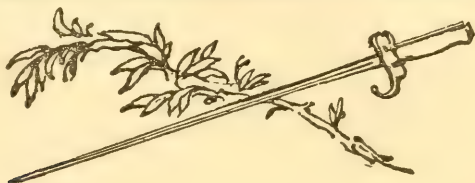
RALPH N. BARRETT <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Dartmouth, '18; entered the Field Service in July, 1917; served with Section Twelve and later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



IN MEMORIAM

PHILIP PHILLIPS BENNEY  
HARRY WORTHINGTON CRAIG  
THEODORE RAYMOND FRUTIGER  
WILLIAM BECKER HAGAN  
WALLER LISLE HARRISON, JUNIOR  
HENRY HOWARD HOUSTON, 2D



## *Section Thirteen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. BENJAMIN F. BUTLER, JR.

II. JOHN M. GRIERSON

III. FRANK X. LAFLAMME

## SUMMARY

SECTION THIRTEEN left Paris in March, 1917, going first to the Champagne, where it took part in the great French offensive of April. In May the Section worked the *poste* at Mont Cornillet, where it received the first Army citation given to any Field Service Section. In June it moved to Sainte-Ménéhould, thence to Verdun. It was working on the right bank of the Meuse when taken over by the American Army, becoming Section Six-Thirty-One.





## Section Thirteen

Though desolation stain their foiled advance,  
In ashen ruins hearth-stones linger whole; |  
Do what they may they cannot master France,  
Do what they can, they cannot quell the soul.

BARRETT WENDELL

### I

#### SIXTY HOURS FROM BOULEVARDS TO WOUNDED

SECTION THIRTEEN left Paris on March 4, 1917, twenty strong, each man in his car, with Bertwal C. Read, formerly of Section Eight, as our *Chef*. Two days later, we arrived at Châlons and pulled up in the square. Leaving our cars at one of the regimental parks, we hurried to a hot dinner arranged for us by our French Lieutenant, Pierre Emmanuel Rodocanachi, at the *Hôtel de la Haute-Mère Dieu*. It was a godsend to cold and uncomfortable novices at ambulancing such as we were, and our spirits soared, when, in addition, it was announced that we were attached to the 169th Division of the French Army, which would leave the next day for the front. This, in fact, happened, and we reached Sainte-Ménéhould at about six o'clock, where we learned that our billet was in a small town called Maffrecourt, about ten kilometres

distant, to which we continued. Here for the first time the members of the Section heard the guns at the front. No sooner had we arrived than a call came in, and Sidney Colford, with a *brancardier*, went up to answer it. Thus, some sixty hours after leaving rue Raynouard, we carried our first *blessés*.

### IN THE CHAMPAGNE — MONT CORNILLET — VILLERS-MARMERY

OUR sojourn at Maffrecourt, while not really a busy one, taught us the ropes. We had practice in driving at night without lights and we became acquainted with the methods of the French Army. One day in April our Division was moved. Twelve of our ambulances went up to our next stop at l'Épine, and the remainder of the cars took stations along the line of march to pick up men who developed sore feet or other injuries.

Leaving l'Épine, our next cantonment was Champigneul, where we remained a week or longer, awaiting orders and doing *G.B.D.* duty and a certain amount of evacuation to Châlons. At last came the welcome news that our Division was to move and take up what was to be its final position in the grand spring offensive, at Mont Cornillet. Our instructions were to have our cars in the finest possible condition, since it was expected by the general in command that there would be an opportunity to evacuate *blessés* over the ground that had been held by the Germans for such a long time. In fact, the *Médecin Chef* asked us if our cars would be capable of travelling over trenches and through ploughed fields. (He evidently did not know the Ford.) Thereupon we moved to Villers-Marmery where we were to be cantoned. It was the eve of General Nivelle's famous and disastrous attempt to break through the German lines in Champagne.

In Villers-Marmery the streets were so congested with troops and transport wagons that it was almost impossible to manœuvre our cars. The first night there we parked our machines along a road next to what was to be our

## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

*triage* hospital, though our duties were not to begin for two more days. Sleeping-accommodations were of the crudest, some of us bunking in cars, while others found refuge in a leaky old barn recently evacuated by troops, but not by all forms of life. The fellows in the cars had the best time of it, as there was a cloud-burst that first night and the barn was very wet.

Dawn broke cold and damp. We spent the day arranging our permanent cantonment, which was in an old rooming-house on the outskirts of the town, and used before the war for employees of the champagne industry, Villers-Marmery being one of the centres of wine manufacture. The second night proved to be even worse than the first, and at about two o'clock in the morning the English section which was serving this town found that there were more *blessés* than they could handle and so routed us out to aid them. We travelled over roads in the inky blackness that none of us had ever traversed before.

### REAL WORK

OUR real work began the next day. We were to serve the *postes* of Thuizy, Prunay, Wez, and a dressing-station in the third-line trenches that we called the "Boyau." All of these *postes* were under severe shell-fire, as were the roads approaching them. In fact, the whole locality looked unhealthy.

All of our runs were in the neighborhood of Thuizy, which was a half-wrecked village, with French batteries situated all around it and in it. The *poste de secours*, an old château about the centre of the town, was really a beautiful structure. Some of its attractiveness, however, was lost because of its situation in the midst of batteries, which constantly drew the Boche fire. From Thuizy we ran up to Wez, a town in the immediate vicinity and even more perilous, where the *poste de secours* was movable, changing as it was blown up, which made it at times difficult to find.

Prunay was the prize of this trio of *postes*. It could be

approached over a stretch of a kilometre and a half that had once been a road, but at that time was a series of interlocking shell-holes which changed in contour from day to day. When we got a call to this place, we went as far as the outskirts of Wez, stopped our cars, and, peering around a wall, would decide on our next step — for at times it would have been impossible to make the run and escape alive. In such a case, the *conducteur* would sit down behind what cover he could find and wait. At other times, one could go right through. The *poste* itself was a dugout.

The “Boyau” was approached by a road that ran out from Thuizy for about three kilometres to a cross-road artillery observation post, called the “Pyramides,” where, turning to the left for a distance of a kilometre and a quarter, it crossed two lines of old trenches and ended at a sap, fed from the third-line trench. Here was the dressing station. There was no cover for our cars, which were in sight of the Boches, who, however, never shelled us here, except on one or two occasions when the *ambulanciers* got too careless in wandering around the neighborhood, when there would be eventually a grand hegira for cover. In order not to risk losing all the cars by one unlucky shell, we made three groups of the seven cars assigned to the Boyau. The first of these groups consisted of three cars, parked on the outskirts of Thuizy; the second, of two cars, hidden in a belt of woods just before one reached the cross-roads; while the third consisted of two cars at the Boyau. It may be added, in passing, that at these *postes* five of our cars were actually hit.

### NARROW ESCAPES

THERE were, of course, a number of times when we had narrow escapes. One of the most spectacular of these occurred on the road from Thuizy to the Pyramides. One afternoon we, at the second *poste*, hearing *arrivés* in the direction of Thuizy, looked down the road and saw one of our ambulances coming up as fast as it could go. This

## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

stretch of road was very exposed, but up to that time the Boches had not shelled ambulances at this point. However, from the spectacle that greeted our eyes, it was evident that they had begun, for on both sides and behind the flying car were rising fountains of earth and smoke, approaching closer and closer to the speeding vehicle. Never was a car more anxious to be elsewhere. The scene was nearly as exciting for us as for the driver. It came closer and closer, until we could recognize the machine as that driven by Hines. We knew that if he could make the belt of trees where we were standing, he would be comparatively safe; but could he do it? When he was only about five hundred yards from safety and we were just congratulating ourselves and him on his escape, the car was suddenly enveloped in a cloud of smoke. It seemed certain that he had been hit, and a Frenchman standing with us exclaimed: "*Fini — mort pour la France.*" We were on the point of starting out to bring him in, when to our astonishment we saw the radiator and front wheels of the Ford come bounding through the swirling dust and smoke of the explosion, and a minute later Hines was with us.

### THE CHAMPAGNE ATTACK, 1917 — EVACUATIONS

It was about the end of April that we saw the first segment of the French troops going up to open the great offensive in the Mont Cornillet sector of Champagne. These regiments were the flower of the attacking troops. They had been freshly recruited, equipped, and trained for this event which was to mean so much to France. Never had we seen men more fit or more ready for the work that was before them. Here was the situation: the Boches had retreated to this point after the Battle of the Marne, and for two and a half years had been entrenching themselves there. The objective was to dislodge them from these formidable positions and take the commanding hills, Mont Cornillet, Mont Haut, Mont Blanc, and the Casque. This would mean an advance of from three



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

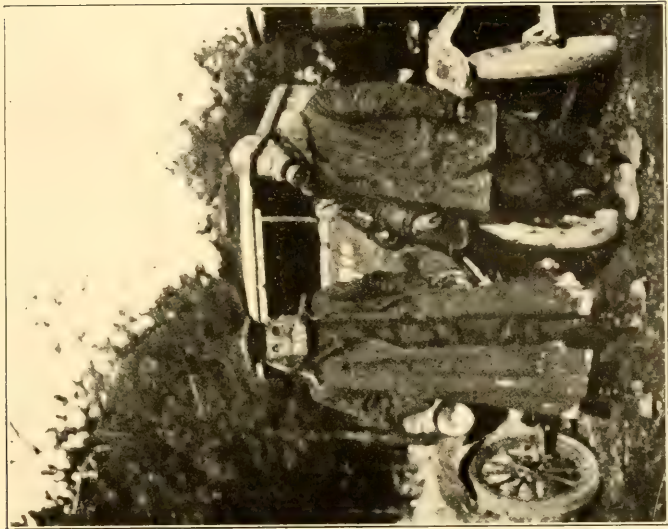
---

to seven kilometres over a terrain that seemed insuperable, as it had proved in former attacks. The particular objective assigned to the troops with which we were connected was the occupation of the far slope of Mont Cornillet, made more difficult by the fact that the crest was raked by an enfilading fire of hundreds of heavy guns.

Three days later, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the attack commenced, and by midnight the wounded began to arrive, at first in dribblets, then more and more numerous. The next morning at eleven we received a message asking if we could spare five cars to the *triage* hospital at Pont d'Issu. This *poste* was served by a section of French ambulances, but there were more wounded than they could take care of. So five of us were assigned to this duty, which, on account of weather and road conditions, it was not easy to perform, for the route over which we were to transport our *blessés* was for the first three kilometres a sunken road running along a canal, and in a terrible condition, due to the heavy traffic of the past week and the constant rains. It was necessary to use low speed for this entire distance, and, even then, run as slowly as possible, to get your men through alive. The remaining seven kilometres were macadamized, and, with the usual bumps, choked day and night with three lines of *camions*, caissons, troops and all the other paraphernalia of war.

### TERRIBLE HOSPITAL CONDITIONS — RAIN

THE hospital itself beggared description. Rain had commenced to fall again and was drenching the wounded for whom there was no place in the three long buildings that constituted the hospital proper. Inside, the stretchers were laid so close that no inch was left uncovered, and it seemed hopeless for the doctors to try and do anything; they were simply swamped, while outside was still a long line of horse and motor ambulances waiting to be unloaded and then return to their *postes de secours* for more wounded. In front of one of the buildings was a group of a hundred or so suffering men, some standing, and others



TWO TYPES OF FRENCH GAS MASKS



A HALT "EN ROUTE"



## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

sprawled in the mud and water, poor fellows who had dragged themselves for five miles, some using their guns as crutches, others leaning for support on less severely wounded comrades. These men bore wounds of every kind, and, under normal conditions, many of them would have been stretcher cases. But on account of the congestion, every one who could stagger along had been forced to walk, and some of them had been waiting since the night before to be transported to the evacuation hospital, while more and more came hobbling in every moment. It was hard for us to believe that these shattered wrecks of humanity were the same men who had joked and laughed with us as they marched by a few hours before.

We set to work and toiled the rest of that day, that night, and the next day; but still the wounded came in, and it did not seem that we were making any impression on the mass. No one stopped for food in all this time. The doctors worked like machines, their eyes sunk in their heads, and they went about their task as if in a dream. As for us, it was just back and forth over those same ten kilometres. When loaded, we had for company the moans and screams of the poor soldiers behind us. Every unavoidable bump and depression on that terrible road wrung from their shattered bodies fresh agony, until it seemed that they could bear no more; and in fact, many of them did not, for too often, at the end of the run, one or more of the occupants of our cars had been released from his suffering by death.

As the second day drew to a close, the flood of wounded from the front diminished, fortunately, to a marked degree. But the *triage* itself was even more congested than when we first arrived. At about eight that evening, I stopped at the hospital long enough to snatch a bit of bread and meat. This was the first let-up that I had had, but there was no rest, with the appealing eyes of the occupants of that horror house fixed beseechingly on you, asking, as no words could, for the relief that we alone could give them. All that night our reeking cars continued

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

their trips. It was always the same thing — before your eyes stood the picture of those men waiting as they had been waiting for a day or more, and we able only to take a certain number and make comparatively few trips because of the need of gentleness. How we raced our cars back!

### THE LAST DAY OF ATTACK

I SHALL never forget the dawn of the last day. Looking off toward the front, I could see the last star-shell curving up from the trenches, which meant the attack was still going on; that the important thing was the taking of the hill, that which I had been doing was nothing more than cleaning up the units which were out of it, and that this horrible suffering which I had seen was just a local, little thing, which had all been arranged for and would have no ultimate effect on the success or failure of the fight. It must require a certain hardness of heart, on the part of the Commanding General, to see all this and still continue to throw more and more men into the vortex of this hell from which these poor wounded ones had been spewed. And while my thoughts ran on thus, the guns continued to rumble, the ammunition went up to create more of the same havoc on the other side, lines of Boche prisoners under guard passed by, fresh troops went up along the road on the way to take the place of the men whom we had been bringing down, and still the mad attack continued. You could almost see the men throwing themselves against those concrete machine-gun defences that had not been shattered. That day the hill was taken, but at what cost!

### SHELLING VILLERS-MARMERY

I GO back a little chronologically to relate the following incident, which differs from most others in that it records my first witnessing of the wounding of soldiers. Of course, scenes like this have no great importance in themselves, yet remain in the memory because of a touch more personal than that of more stupendous events.



## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

It was an April night in 1917. Section Thirteen was cantoned at Villers-Marmery, fronting Mont Cornillet in the Champagne, where it was our task to evacuate the *triage* hospital, located in an old winery, in sight of the Boches. We had ten cars on duty, and they were kept fairly busy because of the wounded from the attack of the night before. As evening came on, more and more wounded were brought in. There had been no shelling of the town during the day, but for the past three nights the Boches had been firing at it about twenty rounds regularly at two o'clock in the morning. As dusk fell on this particular day, we were wondering whether the performance would be repeated, which we thought would be the case, as these shameful brigands seemed to have an affinity for the neighborhood of the hospital. I "rolled" at ten o'clock with three *couchés* for La Veuve, our evacuation hospital. After leaving my *blessés*, I returned by way of our cantonment, and just as the engine stopped, I heard the first shell of the evening, which fell among the graves of the cemetery some twenty-five metres from the main entrance to the hospital, and directly behind me. I knew this because a gravestone went over my head.

The hospital presented much the same appearance as when I had left, except that the *blessés* who were not to be immediately removed had been placed in the cellar. The receiving-ward offered a quiet appearance, compared with the bedlam that was raging outside. The doctors, as is usual in the French army, when there is much to be done, were doing their duty with coolness and despatch, without regard to the fact that every minute might be their last. A tall, dark-bearded priest was accompanying the doctors. The French priests and Protestant ministers connected with the army take all risks and bring enormous comfort to the soldiers. They seem to feel that the power they represent protects them so that they need have no fear in ministering to the sufferings of the men. The *blessés* on the stretchers, on this occasion, were quiet, and there was little talking, so that one could hear the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

whistle of the arriving shell, followed by the detonation, louder or fainter according to its proximity.

While I was reporting to the *Médecin Chef*, there came a reverberating crash that fairly made the building shake. For a moment we thought that the hospital had been struck, but a man came in and reported that the shell had fallen across the street from the hospital in a courtyard where some men were sleeping. Four of us seized *brancards* and dashed over to find that the shell had pierced the wall of the court, bursting on the inside, where two men had been sleeping under the protection of the wall at this place, both of whom were severely wounded. In placing one of them on a stretcher, one of his legs came off in our hands, and, in the excitement of the moment, some one put the leg back, with the foot next to his head. I shall never forget the gruesome picture which that stretcher presented when we set it down under the electric light of the operating-room. This poor chap, I may add, died before they could operate on him, while the other, though badly shot up, was evacuated successfully.

BENJAMIN F. BUTLER, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; New Mexico State College, '16; served as driver and *Sous-Chef* of Section Thirteen from March, 1917; later a Sergeant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## II

### WRITING IN A DUGOUT

*Minaucourt, March 11, 1917*

WE are on duty here for twenty-four hours, ending tomorrow at noon. I am writing this in our dugout by the light of an acetylene lamp on a very dirty table in the midst of some French doctors and stretcher-bearers. The dugout is in the side of a valley a kilometre or two back of the lines, that side of the valley toward H.M. the enemy. On the other side, just opposite us, is a French battery which is being shelled occasionally, so that the Boche shells pass whining over us, not very far overhead, as we are nearly at the top of our side of the hill.

*Later*

I AM writing in the front of my car, as the concussion of the French guns opposite, which are coming back a bit now, kept putting out the lamp inside. Our cars, four of them, are lined up in front of the dugout. There was once a village on this spot, but the houses are now all torn to bits, with great jagged holes in the walls and gaping roofs. Opposite is the church, or rather what is left of it. One side is torn away, the steeple hangs over to one side, every window is smashed, and altogether it is a very pathetic sight.

### A COUP DE MAIN — A NIGHT CALL

*March 12*

WE slept last night, the four of us, on stretchers in the dugout, which could n't have held another object, except perhaps a little more smoke up near the roof. I was first on call, and in the midst of a delightful snooze, I heard the telephone bell tinkle faintly. One can sleep perfectly well with a battery of howitzers working overtime out-

side, but at the sound of a knock on the door, or the telephone bell you come to life at once. Hearing the words *voiture* and *blessé* settled the matter, and I began putting on clothes and was ready when the sentry came back and said, "*Il faut une voiture à Promontoire (our advance poste) — deux assis, un couché.*" He also told me to look out, as there had been some sort of raid, a *coup de main*, and that the Boches were liable to be shelling a bit. I was rather excited by this time, as the sentry looked quite worried, due, I suppose, to thinking of the three men whose lives were to be entrusted for the next half-hour to a young and unknown stranger driving a Ford ambulance over a doubtful road at 2 A.M., without lights.

It was bitter cold, and absolutely quiet when I pulled up to the *poste*, which was about a kilometre away. After turning around, we loaded the *couché*, and the two *assis* climbed painfully aboard, the stretcher-bearers bolted inside, while I closed up the back of the car, and we started off. There was no trouble at all, as there was a brilliant moon; but the worst part was finding the speed to drive at, as my *couché* was in quite a bad way and let it be known at each bump by groaning or knocking imploringly on the wood behind me, which — I not being at all calloused yet — made me feel very ashamed of myself. I reached the hospital all right and had the car unloaded. But I did n't dare to look my *couché* in the face; and started back after a cup of hot tea with some rum in it.

But coming back was quite different. It had clouded up, and it was a lot harder to see the road, which for the last three or four kilometres ran among and in front of a lot of batteries. I was abreast of one of them when suddenly there was a flash of fire, followed by a terrific crash on the side of the road to my left, which left me absolutely paralyzed, but still clutching the steering-wheel and going forward a lot faster than I should have been. Of course, I did n't know what it was, but supposed it to

## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

be a German shell aimed at the car, and wondered where the next one was going to hit. Then there were more flashes and explosions all around, and I realized that it was our guns opening up a *barrage*. It was very wonderful, indeed. The lines were a continual glare of light from hovering star-shells and rockets — red and green ones as signals of some kind: the most terrific noise I have ever heard. Luckily I had nothing to pass on the road for the rest of the trip. By the way, passing artillery transports at night is one of the things that keeps you on edge, while you grind by a long, jingling line of limbers, and pray, between shouts of "*à droite*," that your rear wheel may not skid with a thud into the ditch three inches on your left. And all this goes on in almost absolute darkness, if there be no moon.

### THE CHAMPAGNE AND REPOS

*Villers-Marmery, May 8*

WE are now in a typically Champagne town, made of ancient-looking stone and with very narrow and winding streets. Last night I was standing at the top of one of the main streets which looks toward the lines down between the walls of the houses. As I was watching, a great red glare sprang up along the trenches in front of me, completely putting in the shade all the constellations of star-shells, rockets, flares, and so on, that make the trenches so weird and the roads so impossible by night. The black arms of a windmill were slowly turning around in the foreground of the glare and, all about, our batteries were rumbling and spitting their nightly *barrage*.

We seem now to have an attack every day, and are working hard; quite different from our first little quiet and serene sector at Maffrecourt.

*Later*

FOUND out that the red flame was caused by the explosion of a munition dump.



### A TERRIBLE SCENE

THE night of May 25 was our worst moment, and the Section seems to have set a record for carrying the most wounded in the shortest time. We "rolled" with fifteen hundred of them in those twenty-four hours, over an average trip of ten kilometres — Germans, Africans, and Algerians, but mostly *poilus*. Two of our chaps, Thompson and Cassady, were wounded. In the early morning, our French Lieutenant, Pierre Rodocanachi, who throughout the long night had personally directed the loading of the cars, was struck by a large fragment of shell. Although seriously wounded, he insisted on continuing his task until the congestion of wounded was cleared, he being carried to the hospital with the last load. His leg was so seriously affected that it had to be amputated. About 4 A.M. when I rolled back to the *poste*, was the crowning moment of the night's work. A shell had gone through the roof of the dugout and exploded on the floor in the midst of the doctors, stretcher-bearers, and a few *blessés* waiting for a car. There was a regimental priest with me whom I had picked up on the way, and we broke in the door, blocked with *débris*. Pushing in, we were almost choked by the powder and smell of things burning. The priest flashed a light, and by its uncertain glow we could distinguish a terrible mess of wreckage and bodies. Two or three poor chaps were conscious and were begging for help. It was the most horrible thing I have ever seen. We got them out as best we could and laid them beside the road, and then I took down two who were still alive just as Brownlee Gauld, the chap who was working the *poste* with me at the time, came up.

### THE DECORATION — GENERAL GOURAUD

June 26

YESTERDAY, four of us in the Section were publicly decorated with the *Croix de Guerre*, for various deeds done in the Moronvillers attack. The pinning-on was done by

## SECTION THIRTEEN

---

General Gouraud, the hero of the Dardanelles. The, to us, momentous event took place in a meadow about three miles behind the lines, and we, together with some French officers and soldiers to be decorated, stood within a hollow square formed by about fourteen hundred soldiers, and with the French colors behind us. And there were bands and prancing horses and the flashing swords of the officers, and the fourteen hundred bayonets glinting and glittering in the sun as the soldiers were put through the manual of arms before the ceremony.

We four stood together in a row, and General Gouraud decorated us one after the other, shaking hands and saying a few words to each of us after he had pinned on the medal. And while he was pinning it on, there was absolute silence all over the place, every rifle presented and each officer's sword at his chin. When the General had ended his little speech to us, the band broke into a bar of the "*Marseillaise*," which was the most impressive moment of all. And then the veteran — he had only one arm, one leg, and a padded chest, to say nothing of three rows of medals on his breast — would pass on to the chap next to you, leaving you struggling hard to keep looking straight ahead and not down to see if "it" was really there.

### CHÂTEAUX AND DUTY

July 13

MEN don't go down a road where they see shells landing in order to admire a château at the other end, or to show how smoothly their car rides, but if there is something to be done at the end of that road, there has never been a man in the Section who balked at his turn. The chap that "wins the marbles" is he who can come in after a particularly bad day and night and take the trip of somebody else who is worse off than he is, though, when your nerves are on the ragged edge, you don't feel physically like taking on what is not absolutely necessary. And the *camaraderie* is great, too. If after three days' rolling, there

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

is a jam on the road, and somebody yells out to you, "For God's sake, pull your wheel over," and asks, "Why in the name of hell's bells don't you keep on your side of the road?" you don't get mad, for you know *c'est la guerre!* But the fellows who come in for the butt end of this sort of language are the outriders on the artillery caissons who rake off your lamps, and the fat cooks on the soup-kitchens, who will not move over.

### CROIX DE GUERRE WITH PALM

THE General Staff of the Fourth Army was evidently satisfied with Section Thirteen's little part in this great battle, for they have awarded it an Army citation — not a Divisional or Corps citation, which would have been honor enough, but a citation in the orders of the Army itself, entitling the section flag to a *Croix de Guerre* with palm. It is the first such award that has ever been made to any American ambulance section. The citation reads as follows:

*4<sup>e</sup> Armée  
État-Major  
Bureau du Personnel*

*Au G.Q.G. le 29 Juin, 1917*

*Ordre Général N° 929*

LE Général Gouraud, Commandant la 4<sup>e</sup> Armée, cite à l'Ordre de l'Armée la Section Sanitaire Automobile Américaine No. 13:

"Sous les ordres du sous-lieutenant Rodocanachi, a assuré pendant l'offensive d'Avril et Mai, 1917, le service des évacuations dans un secteur fréquemment bombardé. Les conducteurs américains ont fait preuve de la plus grande endurance, de courage, et de sang-froid, notamment le 25 Mai au cours de la relève et du transport des blessés sous un bombardement meurtrier."

*Signé: GOURAUD*

JOHN M. GRIERSON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; entered Field Service, February, 1917, serving with Section Thirteen, and later as a First-Class Sergeant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

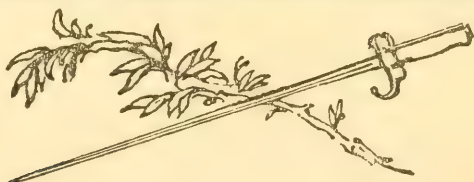
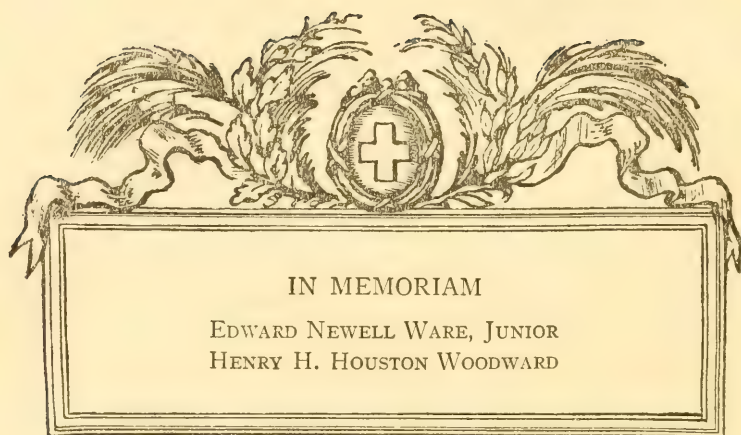
It was while we were attached to the 60th Division of French Infantry that we were taken over, on September 17, 1917, by the U.S. Army. This took place at Billy-le-Grand, in Champagne. The last of September, we moved to Jalons-les-Vignes, in Champagne, and then to Belrupt, in the Verdun region, with work at the Carrière d'Haudromont in October. We were shortly detached from the 60th Division, and moved to Issoncourt. This took place in the first part of November.

On November 18 we moved to Condé-en-Barrois, where we were attached to the 63d Division, and on December 4, moved to the Verdun sector, near Côte 344 and Côte du Poivre. Our *postes* were at Vacherauville, Carrière des Anglais, Bras, and La Fourche. On January 20 we moved back to Condé-en-Barrois, and in the last days of January to Pierrefitte, near Saint-Mihiel. During the first week in February we moved to Triaucourt, and on the 25th of that month to the Argonne, in the sector of La Harazée and the Four de Paris. We were cantoned in Sainte-Ménéhould for a few days, and later in Florent. In March, we took a sector to our right, with *postes* called "La Chalade" and "Chardon."

On June 18 we moved to the Commercy sector, near Saint-Mihiel, with the 34th Division. We relieved a French ambulance section, which went to our old 63d Division. On August 1, we went to Sorcy, near Commercy. It was during the middle of August that we took a four-day convoy up to Amiens, and, with the 34th Division took over the lines at Lihons and Rosières-en-Santerre during the Somme-Aisne offensive. We followed the advance as far as Saint-Quentin. Then came *repos* for a week near Amiens. We worked at the *H.O.E.* at Hatten-court this week. A week later, in the first part of October, we moved up to Saint-Quentin for the continuation of the Somme-Oise offensive. We followed this as far as Guise, where we were when the Armistice was declared. The Division left the lines, and went under orders to Paris, and we followed the march, *via* Mont d'Origny, Breteuil, Beauvais, Dieudonné, Montlignon, and Clichy. On February 11 we were given orders to go to Base Camp, *en route* for home.

FRANK X. LAFLAMME <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Manchester, New Hampshire; New Hampshire State University; joined Section Thirteen in June, 1917; subsequently served in the U.S. Army Ambulance Service with French Army during the war.





## *Section Fourteen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

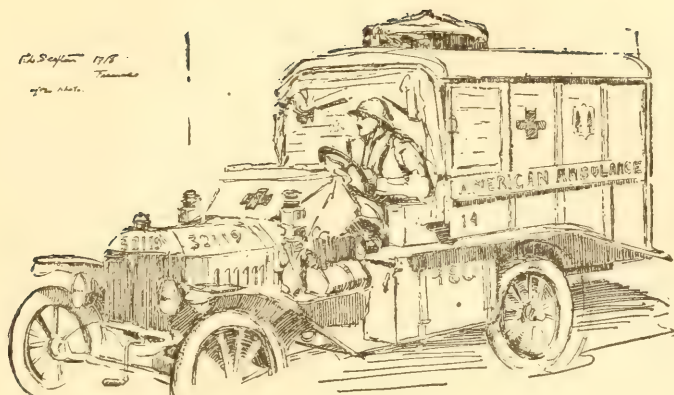
I. JOSEPH H. EASTMAN

II. WILLIAM J. LOSH

III. FRANKLIN B. SKEELE

## SUMMARY

SECTION FOURTEEN, a Leland Stanford University section, sailed from New York as a complete unit on the 14th of February, 1917, just after the breaking-off of diplomatic relations with Germany. It went immediately to the front, working in the Verdun sector, then comparatively quiet. On April 15 it moved to the Toul sector, in the region of Commercy. At length it went *en repos* near Ligny-en-Barrois. On June 5 it journeyed to the Champagne, near Mourmelon-le-Petit, in the Moronvilliers sector, where it remained until recruited into the United States Army, as Section Six-Thirty-Two.



## Section Fourteen

Oh, it is n't in words that we show it —  
 They're too feeble to tell what we feel;  
 It's down in our hearts that we know it,  
 It's down in our souls that it's real.  
 So we stick to our work as we find it,  
 And forget the caprices of Chance,  
 For we know that the price of the big sacrifice,  
 Is little enough — for France!

ROBERT A. DONALDSON

### I

#### ON THE PACIFIC COAST

TOWARD the close of 1916, one hundred and fifty students of Stanford University assembled and signified their willingness to abandon the classroom for ambulance driving on the Western Front. From these young men was selected a group of twenty which became known as the First Unit of Friends of France, and later as Section Fourteen.

"Friends of France" is an association having a wide membership in California and was founded to promote cordial relations between the two Republics — "for Humanity and the Humanities." To its generosity and enthusiasm is due the success of the expedition and its

influence in awakening, on the Pacific Slope, interest in the War.

On February 3, 1917, at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, the society gave a banquet and leave-taking to the young men of the unit, each of whom was presented with a brassard bearing the shield of the Society made by Mrs. W. B. Bourn, of the Friends of France; and on the following morning the students boarded their special car bound for the east. On February 14 they sailed from New York.

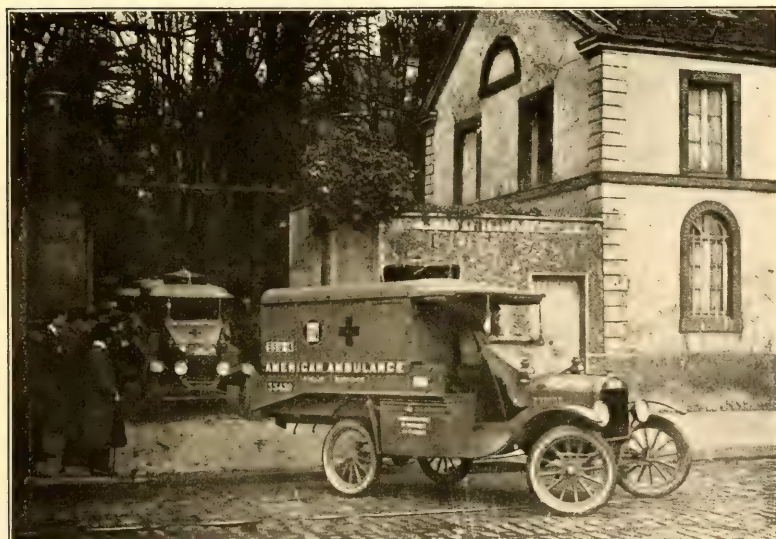
Section Fourteen was the first section of the Field Service to come from the Pacific Coast, and in recognition of this fact, which was significant of the extending interest throughout the States in France and the war, the departure of the Section from Paris was marked with considerable ceremony. The farewell dinner at 21 rue Raynouard on March 15, which, according to custom, marked the leave-taking of sections for the front, was graced by the presence of the American Ambassador to France, Mr. William J. Sharp, and the former Ambassador of France to the United States, M. Jules Cambon, both of whom spoke eloquently of the growing *rapprochement* of the two Republics. Mr. Andrew, the Director of the Field Service, presided, and speeches were also made by representatives of the French Army and the officers of the Section, pledging their best efforts to the common cause. On the morning of March 16, the Section rolled out of the lower gate of "21," with its convoy of twenty-four new cars, bound for the front.

### QUIET TIMES NEAR VERDUN AND TOUL

THE Section first served at Montgrignon, carrying wounded into Verdun two miles away, and spent long hours in the captured German canal-boat waiting for the nine or ten cases that were carried down the canal during a shift. But after a time even the famed city of Verdun, which was being given a rest for the moment, began to lag in interest. So we were glad when, on the morning of



TYPICAL FIELD HOSPITAL—THIS AT CLAIRS-CHÊNES



DEPARTURE OF A SECTION FROM THE LOWER GATE OF  
"RUE RAYNOUARD." SECTION FOURTEEN LEAVING FOR THE FRONT





## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

April 14, orders came to pack, and by evening most of the cars were loaded for travel.

The first stop was to put up for a few nights' lodging in a leaking and rat-infested shed along the side of the aviation hangars of Vadelaincourt, where some in the Section first contracted the aeroplane germ. Another short stop was made at Chardogne, near Bar-le-Duc, a hospitable and never-to-be-forgotten village far, far behind the world. Then we went on to the spacious quarters in the college at Commercy. If Verdun was having a rest, Commercy had declared peace!

With less effort than it takes to tell it, the Section was able to serve *postes de secours* along a twenty-kilometre front, in addition to carrying the patients of six or seven evacuation hospitals.

Artillery action could be seen from most of the *postes* at times, and at one of them it was, on occasions, even the traditional thing to take to the shelter of *abris*. Then all will remember that excitable station-master who always made such a fuss over receiving "more cases than the hospital train would hold"; the streets that became cleared of terrified pedestrians when our cars appeared on the scene; the uncomprehending *professeur* of the *collège*; and the comrades at the different *postes* — these were the high-lights. Nor in this enumeration of the memorable things of the region should we forget the pastry-shop life, for there Commercy stands on its own feet.

### REPOS AT LIGNY-EN-BARROIS

At length the French troops with whom we were associated had become well rested and were moved forward in anticipation of entering a more active *secteur* of the front, and Section Fourteen took to the road at the same time. It went first to Ligny-en-Barrois, where, under the shade trees between the cathedral and the public school, our cars were parked during several idle weeks of springtime. Ligny is a town of rare charm where at evening towns-

people and the girls from the war factories promenaded about the square and along the paths through the forest park, and beside the river and canal. It was here, too, in the canal locks, that we fought out swimming and diving titles. *Ambulanciers* who had hitherto been listless toward the language now took new heart, that they might compete with the more studious, and likewise stand well in the eyes of feminine Ligny. As we were housed in the open near our ambulances, the boys often received callers, swarms of *gamins* and *gamines* overrunning at recess the cars that filled their playground, while the villagers at the forenoon hour and the church-goers at the not infrequent masses did the same.

On June 4, the Section had the signal honor of formally receiving the first Stars and Stripes to fly in France with the official sanction of the United States War Department, a gift of the Friends of France and the Union League of California, sent over to us by a special envoy, Arthur Kimber,<sup>1</sup> a fellow student at Stanford University. Presentation ceremonies of a most impressive character were held on a hilltop outside of Ligny in the presence of two battalions and a regimental French band, and Colonel Colon, in behalf of the armies of France, received the colors and in turn presented them to Section Fourteen.

### THE CHAMPAGNE — MOURMELON — PROSNES

THE following day the Unit journeyed to Mourmelon-le-Petit, behind Moronvilliers in Champagne, to the right of Reims, when brief survey of the district — ruined Prosnes, the *postes de secours* of Constantine and Moscou, two kilometres from smoking Mont Cornillet — sufficed to show us that the long-sought field of action was at hand. A party of six cars, sent to learn the road, and lined up in the open at Constantine in view of German observa-

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Clifford Kimber, of Palo Alto, California; Leland Stanford, '18; joined the Field Service in May, 1917, as a member of Section Fourteen; where he remained until September; subsequently a First Lieutenant, U.S. Aviation; killed in action near Sedan, September 26, 1918.

## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

tion balloons, drew the flattering attention of enemy artillery. In a word, we were at the front this time. The church corner at Prosnes, for example, was a place of evil enough repute to appease the most sensation-craving appetites. Some made a practice of skidding around it; others killed their engines and had to re-crank; while at least one managed it by whistling, or, if under pressure, by singing. The trench side of the Constantine *abri* was a pit-seat to the spectacle of shells bursting along the hills and in the surrounding fields. All in all there was a great deal of tension in Prosnes, with its terrific noise, the number and character of the wounded, and the conditions imposed on road travel.

The exposure to danger, as well as the opportunity to witness trench life first-hand, was perhaps the outstanding benefit received by the members of the unit from their work at this time. It gave us, too, a keener appreciation of the burden carried by the French soldiers, promoted respect for the men in the trenches, and altered views regarding the war's obligations. When the Section was nearing the time to retire *en repos*, and the first term of service was about to be completed, eight members accepted a call to join the second Stanford unit, then leaving for the Balkans to become Section Ten. On the Fourth of July, the Section was presented the *Croix de Guerre* with Divisional *citation*, for the manner of its work performed at Verdun and in the Moronvilliers sector.

JOSEPH H. EASTMAN <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Pleasanton, Cal.; Stanford, '18; served with Section Fourteen from March to August, 1917; later became a First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Air Service.

## II

### A GAS AND FIRE ATTACK

*Glorieux, March 25*

WE were very busy the other night, because of a gas attack near by, and, most terrible of all, a liquid-fire attack. We carried the wounded to the town through the dark. My first entrance into the dressing-station was with some of my *blessés*. On the rack on which they lift the stretchers lay a liquid-fire victim — his face black and charred like a cinder and the upper part of his body scorched and cooked. He hardly murmured. The gas victims can scarcely move; they cough and gasp and choke in great pain.

*Vadelaincourt, April 16*

WE are about twenty kilometres from Verdun, where is the most famous aviation camp in France, in fact the aviation base for the entire sector.

The Division has received orders to move; so we shall have to move with it. All of our old friends, the *brancardiers*, go along, and it seems that they are going to be our comrades for good. They are a mixed crew. Most of them are ordinary *poilus* with good hearts; but the best of them are well educated Catholic priests who make good chums and are painstaking French instructors.

The Division moves on foot; so we run ahead and wait a few days for them to catch up and go on again. This is tiresome travelling, and as transients we get thrown into almost any kind of quarters. At one town we were in a long, black, barren, portable house, built entirely without nails, which we shared half and half with a corps of French wireless men. The floor was of earth, stones, and straw. Last night, when all was quiet, a rat scout made a survey of the room and then piped up the regiment. Hundreds swarmed and swept, marched and counter-marched,



## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

squeaking and fighting, all over the place for the whole night. Anticipating as much, I had put shoes, bags, and everything out of reach on a wire, and so felt comparatively safe.

I am going to bed now. I never take off more than my shoes and coat.

*Mourmelon-le-Petit, June 11*

YESTERDAY'S ride of some one hundred kilometres was very beautiful. A thunderstorm blew over early in the morning, freshening the air and the colors of the fields, and pleasing us by laying the dust. We ran through a farming country where the regular patches of blooming alfalfa were a glowing pink, setting off the russet of newly ploughed ground and the silvery green of the grain. And such wild flowers! It is time for California to shut up and hand the china teapot to France. The principal flower is the scarlet poppy, with four broad petals of crinkly thinness, forming a very wide cup. Never was there flower more beautiful, and it abounds everywhere. Then there are lupins, buttercups, larkspurs, yellow flags, purple flags, lilies-of-the-valley, and a million others. The trees are all cottonwood and willow except the artificial pine forests. These forests, by the way, are of the greatest military importance, for they screen everything.

### A DEATH CALL

*July, 1917*

IT got dark about ten o'clock. About eleven an officer drove up on his horse behind my car and told me that he had a *blessé* whom his convoy had picked up on the road between our reserve *poste* and the *poste de secours*. He confided to me that the road was being steadily shelled between the two *postes* and that this man and his comrade had been hit by a shell. His comrade was blown in two. So I piled out with my stretcher and gave it to the artilleryman, who put the wounded soldier on it and set him down behind the ambulance. One said he was dead,

but there was a difference of opinion on this point. I lit my *briquet* and in the flickering light we gathered around the stretcher, watching the man shudder and die without a sound. "*Il est mort*," the officer said, "*allons*." And with that they went, leaving me, alone with a shell-torn man, dead but still warm, to gaze at the bloody mass, in the red, flickering light. His right arm was blown off at the elbow, the rest hanging in shreds. His head was riddled with splinters, and there was a hole an inch square in his cheek. Around his body were countless holes and his shirt was bloody and red. I woke up one of the fellows, and we loaded him into the ambulance and carried him to the hospital. It was not exactly the thing to do, but I was n't going to leave him on a stretcher all night by the roadside; so I took him to the hospital and let the authorities there dispose of the body.

As soon as I got back to the *poste de réserve*, the first car came back; covered with earth and full of holes. Randau left it in front of the *poste* — there is no shelter for cars — when a shell fell ten feet away. He was in an *abri*, but was n't a lot safer, for a "77" fell ten feet away from where he was resting and threw earth in the door. He also reported bombardment of the little town halfway to the *poste*. Anyway, it was up to me to see if there were not something to be done in that place, so I cranked up and buzzed down the road, somewhat shaky from seeing the evidence of the deadly bombardment before me. "Toad" Strong was with me. We are now running two to a car for moral support. As we stopped at a rise, we looked at the little town below and across the plain to the *poste*. The hills were illuminated by star-shells over the trenches and by artillery rockets, while across the plain came the sharp, wicked snaps of shrapnel in the air around the *poste*, and in the town the heavy flash of high-explosives.

### "QU'Y FAIRE?"

THE psychology of judgment at such a moment is interesting. There is an object to be attained — reaching the

## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

*poste*. There is shelling of a town below, a shell arriving every fifteen seconds with an interval of a minute now and then. There is shrapnel around the object. The judgment to be reached is the most advantageous manner of reaching the *poste* without being hit. One does n't know whether to take it slowly and wait for an interval to be apparent or to tear through and trust to luck. On the return trip from the *poste*, the question is more complicated. If you go slowly, you are liable to be clipped from behind by shrapnel; and if you hurry, you are liable to reach the town at the same time that a shell does.

Anyhow, we went at a rush and got through the town without mishap, although a shell hit behind us just off the road. Then we faced the shrapnel. We waited this out, and halfway between, at a suitable moment, we tore up to the *poste*, backed up in a second, and beat it for the shelter. Immediately after, two shells fell twenty yards away, but without hitting the car.

Rolled up then in a blanket to sleep; but half an hour later an urgent case arrived. He had his nose, half his cheeks, his upper lip and teeth, and half his chin shot away. I expect he died. While bringing him in, two "150's" exploded thirty yards to our left in the town, throwing earth and rocks and the smell of powder across the road. We were glad to get out alive. This was at 3 A.M.

Such was the night. I did not really feel the effects of it all until after I came off, when I had a nervous depression corresponding to the excitement of the night before. The Lieutenant told us we looked ten years older, and I guess we did, for I felt so. Words cannot really express the nervous excitement of a night like that, mixed up with death and duty and the agony of life.

WILLIAM J. LOSH<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of San Francisco; served with Section Fourteen until June, 1917, when he joined Section Ten in the Orient; the above are extracts from letters.

### III

#### THE SUFFERING AND BRAVERY OF THE POILU

September, 1917

IT seems as though every time I go on duty new experiences increase my hatred of the hell of war. I cannot tell you all of them, the censor would object; but I do wish there was some way of telling you just how stoical to suffering the French *poilu* is. This is an impression that grows on me, with every wounded man that I carry. One has to become accustomed to so many heart-tearing scenes. The sight of blood-soaked bandages is frequent; but to see a young fellow with blood matted between a week's growth of whiskers and perhaps partly covered with mud; to see a pair of sky-blue eyes peering out from the paleness of intense suffering, and perhaps to hear him talk of home in his delirium, are things one can never become accustomed to. Strange as it may seem, I have never seen a wounded Frenchman who was unconscious no matter what the pain. I had one soldier whose leg had been broken below the knee by a piece of shell, and in some way his foot had got turned partly around. How the poor boy kept from groaning, I never knew. But what was more, he partly sat up in his stretcher and asked one of the carriers to turn the foot slowly back again. Cautiously and gently his comrade worked, until the suffering *poilu* said, "There," as he lay back on the pillowless stretcher. Your imagination can never paint the picture; you must see and experience the bravery of wounded France to realize her spirit. Boys of eighteen, men of forty, all give their lives and suffer for ideals that mean more to them than life. And then comes our part — to get the wounded *poilu* quickly to the hospital and to the skillful surgeon, for time means life. And yet one must drive carefully, for every jar means agony.



AMBULANCE PANEL OF THE FIRST LELAND STANFORD SECTION, SHOWING THE EMBLEM OF THE "FRIENDS OF FRANCE" SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA





## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

### COMRADES IN SONG

A RECENT experience when we went back of the lines for a rest may interest. Every one was scolding, crabbing, condemning the management for having picked out such a place for our sojourn, when a huge rat ran across the floor, which did not tend to lessen our discontent. The blame thing was as big as a rabbit. I suppose he ran so fast because of dissatisfaction at our having disturbed him in his retreat. Finally, out of the storm came a voice at the door announcing supper. So twenty-two grumbling tired men scuffled down the stairs, out past the front yard with its odors, to the café, which the manager loaned to us until we could get better settled.

Now comes the psychological part of the whole thing. We filled over half of the big room, while Frenchmen, the stretcher-bearers, and hospital attendants, with whom we had been working the past months and whom we had learned to know through the suffering of others, occupied half of the small room. Suddenly one of our men began to sing — I think it was "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now?" — and, like a stimulant to a heart about to flutter out, the singing began to blot out blues and grumbles and growls. I'll never forget, in all my life, what happened. Dinner was over by this time, and we sang a few more songs. Then the old Frenchmen began. You cannot understand the spirit until you see how a typical, educated Frenchman of university type, as most of these are — how these men with their families awaiting their return, all entered into the spirit of the music with an enthusiasm such as I have never seen. They sang with their eyes, with their hearts, with their bodies; there was no restraint, no bashfulness. Even if some could not keep time or pitch, it made no difference. Then one of our men recited, sang a few songs with the sweetness of a McCormack, and one of their men responded, while we joined in on the chorus. "When Good Fellows Get Together" was the most *à propos* song we sang. We cheered them, they

cheered us. It made absolutely no difference that we could not understand the words to their songs; nor could they make out what we were singing. The spirit was there and we felt it. Finally we ended with the "Star-Spangled Banner," and they with the "*Marseillaise*." And then we came back to a parlor, which before had seemed a rotten old garret because of our attitude of mind. Even the rat was forgotten.

### "PÈRE NOËL" AT THE FRONT

*Christmas, 1917*

ONE of the men said to me just before Christmas that he thought it sounded like sarcasm for folks to wish us a "Merry Christmas." He was basing his remark on our surroundings at that time. The barracks were cold with their damp ground floors. It was so cold, in fact, that I found ice caked in my Ford commutator, and even my fountain-pen ink became solid, though it was in my trunk. Occasionally I wore my overcoat to bed, slept under seven blankets, and for two weeks never took off my clothes. However, my friend was wrong. We had a lively time. As Christmas Day approached, every one got busy. Some went for a tree, others helped the French cook prepare the big meal, while still others were writing little somethings and wrapping mysterious packages that bulged peculiarly. When the men returned with the tree in an ambulance and a load of holly from the woods, we all began decorating the café, our dining-room at that time, where the insides of tin boxes made good reflectors for the candles.

An empty barrack near by served as a distributing-room for old Santa Claus, who was one of the men with his face covered with cotton for a beard and who heightened the effect by sprinkling snow over his jolly self. The children of the village were there long before "*Père Noël*" arrived. One little fellow proudly showed me a sou some one had given him, his only gift, "because his father was away fighting for the future along with thou-

## SECTION FOURTEEN

---

sands of others." Each man of the Section had three toys for distribution among the little ones, and limericks for himself. The reckless drivers received toy ambulances. One who had been "over the top" on a visit had a toy *Croix de Guerre*; while the old Major was given a toy sword; and so on for sixty limericks and toys. We then opened a box of candies sent to the Section, and then those bright-eyed, happy children of France politely took their chocolates and American gum, which at first they did not know what to do with, with a gracious "*Merci*." But the toys they knew well what to do with, for they had seen days when such joys existed.

Then came the turkey dinner, backed by salad, cakes, nuts, fruits, chestnut dressing, mashed potatoes, and candy. Oh, how surely such things did make us forget the discomforts of war! while college songs, yells, and toasts helped make the air glow with the brilliancy of the holly berries. Even Le Beck, the cook, was made to come in to receive our cheers and thanks and be toasted.

Soon after the dinner came the show, for we had one, and a good one, as the French army utilized men, who before the war were actors, for vaudeville performances to cheer up the *poilus en repos*. It is found here at the front as necessary to care for the amusement of the men as it is to provide good food for them. Accordingly, a group of actors of our Division form a sort of stock company with several pieces in their *répertoire*. They have an auto which furnishes electricity, and costumes are given them. It so happened that these actors were quartered in a near-by village and were glad to take part in our vaudeville. We even had their machine for making electricity. Every man in the Section had some part to perform, while the folk of our village, three hundred in number, were the audience. We had tumbling stunts, comedy boxing matches, several skits, minstrel scenes, etc. We had rented a piano from some one in a neighboring city. Burnt corks served to blacken the "coons," who had two German grenades hanging on their belts. One of us actually did

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

a Salome dance dressed in a grass costume made from bits of camouflage while mosquito netting draped "her" extremities.

For seats we dragged in benches and covered them with blankets which we use for wounded soldiers. Our ten acts and the Frenchmen's two comedies lasted until 12.30 A.M. the next morning. But not a single person left the "auditorium," although they could not understand much of our English.

Thus my friend was wrong about it not being possible to have a Merry Christmas out here, for we had a good time ourselves as well as making it a merry day for others.

FRANKLIN B. SKEELE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Los Angeles, Cal.; Stanford, '18; served in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The pages given above are extracts from home letters.





## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

ON September 19, 1917, the Section was officially taken over by the A.E.F. and given the number 632. We were cantoned in Villers-Marmery at the time, serving in the Champagne district in the sector of the Marquises Farm. Our *postes* were Wez, Prosnes, Maisonnnette, La Cloche, and Cuisine.

From November 29 to January 1, 1918, came our first *repos*, near Châlons-sur-Marne. Chepy, Marson, and Jâlons were villages in which we lived. During this *repos* the Section was cited by the Division.

We were then assigned to the same front in the Champagne, but in the adjoining sector of the Mounts. Constancelager, Petite Haie, Bouleaux, Haie Claire, Prosnes, and Constantine Farm, were the *postes*, and our base first La Plaine, then the village of Sept-Saulx.

Allan H. Muhr was our first Lieutenant, Jefferson B. Fletcher, of Columbia University, taking his place in November. About March, 1918, another Lieutenant, Elliott H. Lee, from Princeton, took charge and was with us until *le fin de la guerre*. Émile Baudouy was our French officer from the time of the Section's formation, March 1, 1917, until September, 1918.

We remained in the sector of the Mounts until June 30, 1918, when we headed toward the Marne with our Division, the Eighth. Before the battle on the 15th we were quartered in Pierry, Vinay, and then Le Breuil. Our *postes* during the battle were Tincourt, Œuilly, Festigny, Saint-Martin, Chatillon, Vandières, Dormans, Damery, and Port-à-Binson.

After four days of heavy fighting, when we lost about eighty-two per cent of our Division, we retired to Courcelles. The ranks were soon refilled and August found us again on our way to the Champagne, in the sector of the Mounts again, serving *postes* at Prosnes, Sapinière, Baconnes, Farman, Constantine Farm, Bouleaux, and La Plaine. Mourmelon was the village of our cantonment.

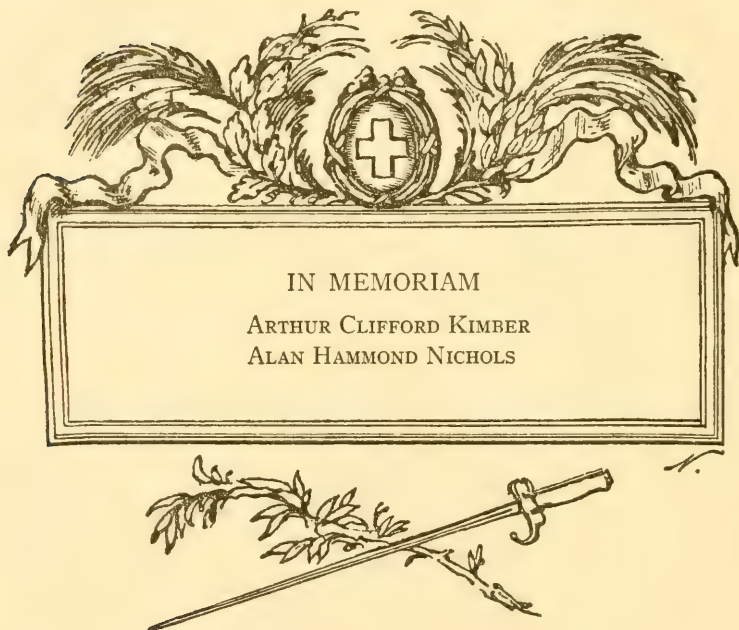
Then came the big advance, September 26, 1918, when we moved forward some 110 kilometres, from Mourmelon to Charleville-Mézières. Our line of advance, covering six weeks, took us through Naurouy, Aussonce, Neufelize, Tagnon, Rethel, to Charleville, which town was the Headquarters of the Ger-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

man General Armies and where the former Kaiser and Crown Prince lived for four years. Our *postes* from here were Mézières, Saint-Laurent, Ville-sur-Lumes, Lumes, Prix, Nouzon, and Romery.

The Section remained in Charleville from the day of its recapture on November 10 to March 7, 1919. Then we headed for home *via* Paris and Base Camp.



## *Section Fifteen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

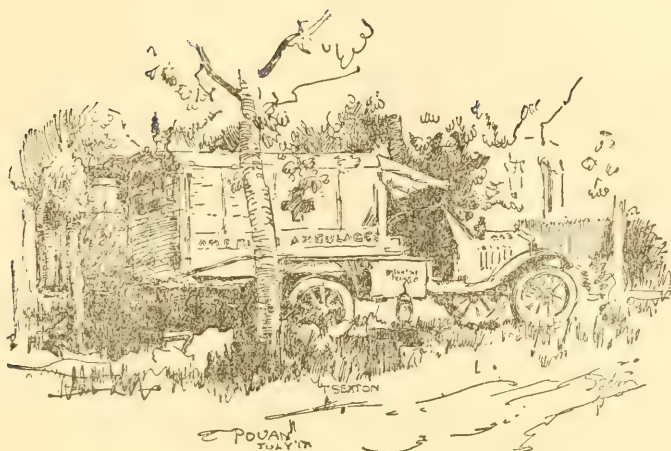
I. CLITUS JONES

II. KEITH VOSBURG

III & IV. JEROME PRESTON

## SUMMARY

SECTION FIFTEEN left Paris about April 10, 1917, arriving a little later at Dombasle, near Verdun. It had *postes* opposite Mort Homme and Côte 304, and there it remained until the end of June, when it retired *en repos* to Wassy far back of the lines. In late July the Section returned to the Verdun sector, working again in the region of Mort Homme, which the French successfully attacked on August 20. Its next move was early in October to the Champagne, where it worked in the region of the Mounts. It was there that the Section was made a part of the American Army as Section Six-Thirty-Three.



## Section Fifteen

Spirit of France, immortal, hail to thee!  
Symbol of hope throughout these darkened years  
When tyranny and might, on land and sea,  
Bring pain and tears.

WILLIAM C. SANGER, JR.

### I

#### THE FRONT — A MOST AUSPICIOUS TIME

SECTION FIFTEEN left Paris for the front at a most auspicious time — it was the first section to go out after the entrance of America into the war, and we were hailed as soldiers and allies.

Just as winter was breaking, the Section arrived at Dombasle-en-Argonne, and found quarters in that little shell-smashed village, ten miles west of Verdun and just behind Mort Homme and Hill 304, both world-famed for the battles that raged over their possession. Section One of the Field Service was on the ground when we arrived, and we took over its *postes de secours*. We were attached to the 32d Division of the French Army, with which we remained during the whole of our history as a unit of the Field Service; and, except for five weeks *en repos*, we always operated in and around Dombasle.



Although the Verdun sector was a comparatively quiet front during the spring of 1917, the work was interesting and somewhat dangerous, the advanced *poste* being at Esnes. This little run from Montzéville to Esnes is well known to every American section that ever worked in the Verdun sector. Nearly the entire road was in view of the German trenches at the foot of Mort Homme. Many sections won their spurs on this road. On it James Liddell, driving ambulance 530, was shelled forty-eight hours after leaving Paris. On his first run to Esnes a shell burst thirty feet away, while fragments from the explosion tore through the car, and an *éclat* cut the back of his coat.

The spot where Liddell nearly met his fate was the scene of many more escapes during the eleven weeks that the Section operated there. It was christened "Hell Corner," and the name has gone down in ambulance history. As a provider of thrills, "Hell Corner" has had no peer.

REPOS — JUBÉCOURT — PREPARATION FOR ATTACK  
BEFORE the Section left Dombasle, it lost its first and highly popular *Chef*, Henderson, who was sent to the School at Meaux. His time with Section Fifteen was brief, but he put into it much energy.

On June 28, the Section went *en repos* at Wassy, in the Department of the Haute-Marne, where we celebrated the Fourth of July, and the French inhabitants made a special effort to do honor to their new ally. The Section acquitted itself well, after doing justice to a champagne dinner, by winning a game of association football and capturing most of the prizes offered at a field meet.

But the most important event of the stay at Wassy was the coming of Lieutenant Fabre, who was to be in charge of the Section, as it proved, as long as we remained members of the Field Service. He became the main factor in the success of the Section because of his energy and cheeriness. He knew how to awaken activity when we

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

were tired of *repos*, and to cheer us when we were worn out with work. Where there were dangers to be encountered, our French Lieutenant was the first man on the scene.

August 2 saw the Section once more on the road back to the front. After a series of stops at various towns, it finally arrived, on August 10, at Jubécourt, where evacuation work started. This was the same sector that we had worked in before; but it was no longer possible to live so close to the lines as Dombasle, for since our departure the Boches had advanced long-range guns, and villages as far as twenty kilometres back were in danger. So our old cantonment at Dombasle was deserted. Section Two had moved out of it under a bombardment and no section occupied it afterwards.

### OSBORN AND RICH WOUNDED

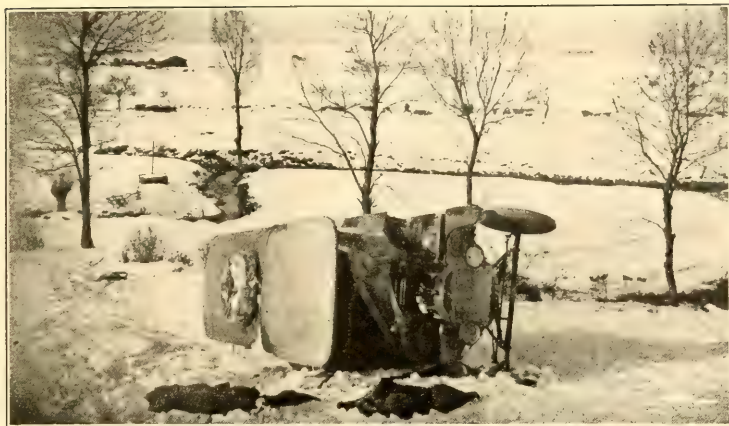
At Jubécourt we could see the preparations for the great attack before Hill 304 and Mort Homme. Troops and supplies moved up nightly. The far-famed Foreign Legion was called upon, together with several other magnificent divisions of France's best Colonial troops, to aid in the effort. The sky was alive with aeroplanes, and the rumble of cannon along the front was almost a continuous roar. Our Division was expected to figure in the attack, and we all knew what that would mean for us. So Osborn our *Chef*, Lieutenant Fabre, Dominic Rich and Van Alstyne, went out to investigate the prospective *poste de secours* at La Claire. The trip resulted disastrously. At La Claire a bombardment was in progress, and before the men could make their way to cover, a shell exploded near them. Osborn and Rich were wounded and Lieutenant Fabre and Van Alstyne knocked down by the concussion, but not wounded. Rich, with his right arm splintered, and Osborn, with both legs struck, were hurt rather seriously. Eventually the latter had to return to America. Robert Paradise succeeded him as *Chef*, with Van Alstyne as *Sous-Chef*.

### RAMPONT — AIDING IN THE ATTACK

ON August 18 the Section moved to Rampont, in order to be nearer the lines when the attack should take place. At about this time, we learned, however, that our Division would not participate and that we should doubtless be doing evacuation work for some weeks. There was, of course, a feeling of disappointment in the Section, until the Lieutenant asked and received permission to assist an English ambulance section during the coming battle. The morning of the attack on Mort Homme, ten ambulances were called out, and headed for Hill 232, where we were to receive the wounded. Curtis and Dunn, driving car 513, were the first to reach the *poste* and brought down the first load. The Lieutenant followed close behind them in another ambulance, then others arrived in rapid succession. From then until two o'clock it was "hurry down and get back." The Lieutenant helped load each car as it came up and slammed the door shut as it started down the long stretch to the evacuation hospital eight miles distant. Every car was running its best, and we entered into good-natured rivalry with the English section to see which could carry the most wounded.

By two o'clock all the wounded at the dressing-station had been taken down, though a few were coming in all the time. The Section remained on duty until five o'clock when the day's work appeared to be finished.

Few of the men who were present at that attack will ever forget it. The dust and smoke that covered the country in a murky haze, the ride like mad to the *poste* near Mort Homme, with the guns blazing away on all sides, the hundreds of German prisoners tramping back, and the long rows of wounded at the *poste*, formed a picture so vivid as to be unforgettable. It was a glorious victory for the French, for where Dead Man's Hill and Hill 304 reared their shattered summits, the *poilus* had charged to a depth of four kilometres along the whole sector and had captured more than seven thousand prisoners.



"THE MORNING AFTER" A COLLISION ON THE ROAD



THE FAMOUS "POSTE DE SECOURS" AT ESNES NEAR MORT  
HOMME IN THE VERDUN SECTOR





## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

### JOUY-EN-ARGONNE — MORT HOMME

OUR Division moved up on Mort Homme on August 25, and the Section officially took over the *poste de secours* on Hill 232. Then the cantonment was moved again, this time to Jouy-en-Argonne, a village just over the hill from our former home at Dombasle. The work there was more consistently hard than any the Section had ever had before, for besides the three cars of the *poste de secours*, two or three others were needed for evacuation work at the hospital of Claires-Chênes.

As at Jouy, we lived in tents. Things were damp during the rainy season which followed, and, to add to our troubles, a Boche bombing *escadrille* took up its quarters on the other side of the lines. Now, on every clear night, hostile airplanes circled overhead, spraying the ground with their machine guns, and dropping bombs. The famous hospital of Vadelaincourt was bombed and partially burned on the night of August 20, the day of the great attack, and twice again in September.

The Section just missed trouble at Rampont when the site of the cantonment was bombed the night after we had left for Jouy. It is supposed that the ambulances had been sighted in daytime by an observation plane and that the bombing-planes made their call the same night. In any event one of the four bombs which were dropped fell only a few feet from the spot which had been occupied by our main tent with eighteen men in it.

On September 28 the recruiting officer of the United States Army Ambulance Service visited Section Fifteen, and twenty-three of our thirty men enlisted in the American Army, whereupon Section Fifteen ceased to exist as a Unit of the American Field Service.

CLITUS JONES<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Waco, Texas; University of Texas, '16; entered the Field Service, February, 1917; served with Section Fifteen, and continued with the Section when it became part of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service in France.

## II

### MAKING MERRY EN REPOS

*En Repos, Wassy, July 5, 1917*

OUR twenty ambulances are lined up in the public square of a delightful little town, and each one is completely cleaned and slicked up with oiled rags till they all look like new. One man stays here *en réserve* in case of accidents or sick-calls, while the rest of us swim, play ball, walk, and generally enjoy ourselves, for we are here *en repos*. I have been promoted to *Sous-Chef* of the Section and now have the privilege of "swanking" about the town with a silver grenade, instead of a red, on my collar, and a stripe on my sleeve. We have most excellent quarters in a small Louis XIV château. When we arrived, however, we were billeted in a former dance-hall. But one day, while the *Chef* and I were out walking, we discovered that there were apartments to let in this house, and so inquiries resulted in the Section moving in here, the *Chef* and I sharing the extra rent. Don't be alarmed at this prodigality, for it means only fifty francs per month to be divided between two of us. The place is owned by a most charming French lady, whose husband is in the trenches, and who manages the whole property, together with four charming children, three boys, of thirteen, eight, and six, and a little girl of four. We have all become great friends with the little ones — and we play about together. The *soldats américains*, as they call us, are great favorites with all the children and even the grown people of the town, and it is very pleasant, indeed, to know how kindly they all feel toward us. We also indulge in football and sports generally with the *jeunesse sportive* of Wassy, who much admire our prowess in games. But it is rather a new experience to be stopped in the square by a Sister of Charity and orated at — that is the only way to express it — to this effect: "Oh! how glad the French people

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

are to have you here; how much they like you personally and admire your sports. How kind you are to the children," and so on. I trust the two of us who underwent the ordeal did not look too foolish. It was embarrassing, but certainly not without its humorous and kindly side.

The Fourth of July was celebrated yesterday by the whole town, and we were quite the centre of attraction. It was about the most hectic day I have known. Lord, what a party! It started after breakfast with an inspection by the General of the Division, a courtesy for the Section. Numerous rehearsals had taught us to keep something of a line and how and when to salute; but as a smartly drilled army, I am afraid S.S.U. Fifteen would not take many prizes. The General was very amiable, however; asked to be presented to each man, and went down the line, shaking hands and asking questions as to age, state, etc. He then spoke with the *Chef*, and myself as *Sous-Chef*, for a few minutes and invited us to dinner. Fancy me dining with the General! I will tell of that in its proper place. After the inspection, we had a period for furbishing up, till the municipality gave the Section a banquet at noon. Never before have I eaten and drunk so much. We sat down, some sixty strong, at noon and rose at 2.45 to rush off to prepare for a *fête sportive*. There was course after course of delicious food with two kinds of wine, not to mention coffee and *liqueurs* at the end; and we ate and ate, and stuffed and drank, all the time knowing that we had to run races and play baseball and football immediately after.

Anyhow, at 2.45 we changed into "sportive costumes," khaki shirts, BVD shorts, and such tennis shoes and socks as we could find, and went to the park for the games. Imagine us, torpid with food and drink, doing what follows: All the races and jumps were won by us, for the *poilus*, as you know, are like the French in general, not very athletic. Our demonstration of baseball was highly successful and we won our football game, but were utterly exhausted afterwards.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Then the Section had dinner with champagne, which the *Chef* and I did not attend, as we dined with the General! It was most interesting — we two at a staff dinner where all the other guests were in gorgeous uniforms plentifully bestrewn with medals. I should hardly call it a gay meal. But the General was most gracious and amiable — set the *Chef* on his left hand and poured wine for him, while I was placed next to the Chief of Staff, who speaks English perfectly, and we conversed of hunting and shooting and fishing in California. More wines — three kinds — with *liqueurs* and coffee again. When we finally left at 9.15, I felt this had been indeed an active day — a banquet, a dinner with the General, an inspection by the General, a track meet, a baseball game, and a game of soccer football. So to-day the whole Section is nursing sore muscles and sore heads, and thanking the Lord that July Fourth comes but once a year, especially in France in war-time, and just after America's declaration of war.

Wassy, July 15

WE have seen two bodies of Americans here on the way to their training-camps. They are a good lot, most of them, but furnish some amusement to our French Lieutenant. For example, a truck-load of officers came through yesterday, none of whom spoke French, and who had only the vaguest idea where they were headed for. We set them on a road leading in the general direction in which they thought their destination lay and gave them our blessings. They were very grateful and a very nice-looking bunch. But it all amuses the French, and I suppose we have a lot to learn.

KEITH VOSBURG<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Azusa, California; University of California, '10, Oxford University, England, and Harvard; served with Sections Fifteen and Thirty-Two of the Field Service, which he joined in February, 1917; later a First Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service in France. The above are extracts from Mr. Vosburg's home correspondence.

### III

#### DAY BY DAY

*Paris, Sunday, March 4, 1917*

THE Champs Elysées was brilliant with life and color this fine Sunday afternoon. The sidewalks were crowded with officers and beautiful women, with the conditions of color absolutely reversed from those of peace-time — black for the women and all the tints of the rainbow for the soldiers. There is nothing of the stiff martial Hun about them, but a certain soldierly dignity of carriage that conceals, but at the same time proclaims, sternness and unflinching devotion in time of peril.

*Tuesday, March 13*

WHEN I walked home this evening, through the deserted streets with a light shining only here and there, a strange impression of the unreality of my experience came upon me. It did not seem possible that I was walking down a street of that Paris of my dreams, thousands of miles from home.

*Wednesday, April 11*

A BIG dinner here at 21 rue Raynouard this evening to Section Fifteen, which goes out to the front to-morrow.

*Dombasle, Sunday, April 15*

WE started out slowly from Paris at 8 A.M. on the 12th. Our Section has the record for quick time. Forty-seven hours out of Paris, we carried *blessés* at Verdun, replacing Section One which went to Champagne. Cleaned up my car in the morning and played a little baseball. It is certainly a queer contrast — a quiet game of catch in the road here, while just over the hill the batteries are banging away. As yet I cannot quite realize



that we are in the midst of death and suffering. We are not far from Verdun, with Mort Homme and Hill 304 on the east, and the Argonne Forest to the west. In the evening, we played duck on the rock to the great amusement of some *poilus*, who are most interesting and pleasant. They seem to have a very real and hearty welcome for us. The corporal we talked with was very intelligent, and well-educated; he made me feel ashamed of myself, he knew so much of English literature. He recited Keats and Tennyson for us. . . . We have a wonderfully comfortable room with a fire going all the time.

Wednesday, April 18

DULL. SNOW. Am writing this entry in the little *abri* in the gray, dripping woods. Everywhere is dirty, sticky, yellow mud that is unlike anything I have seen before. A *poilu* has just come in from the trenches looking very sad and discouraged. The poor fellow was *malade*; so Clark took him back in his car. He also took two *per-missionnaires* who were as happy as children at the thought of leaving, at least for a little while, the misery of it all.

Thursday, April 19

SLEPT very comfortably on my stretcher and woke at six o'clock to take four *assis* down to Dombasle. When I got out, the sun had just risen and shone redly through the woods, like a ball of dull fire. The sky was streaked with bands of blue, saffron, and pink, all in the lightest tints. Along the road, between me and the dawn, came a file of blue-clad heroes. They were going to relieve their comrades in the trenches, and, in spite of what lay ahead, they were singing. The finest men in the world, they are, and the sight of them cheerily going forward, in the peaceful freshness of dawn, to their terrible task, made an impression on me that I shall never forget. . . . Ate lunch outdoors in the warm sun to the music of shells whistling overhead and the batteries of "75's" exploding under my

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

nose. It was all very new and tremendously interesting. But, though it was the first time I had been under fire, I did not feel any peculiar emotion aside from curiosity and interest. At twelve o'clock they brought in a poor fellow who had been badly wounded and I set right out with him. An exploding shell had hurt him terribly, so I went very slowly and carefully all the way to Ville, as he was fully conscious and suffering intensely. The poor man kept softly groaning all the way, for, in spite of all my efforts, the jolts and jars were dreadful. Coming back from Ville a natural reaction took place and I slewed and tore around the slippery corners to beat the band; singing away for no reason in the wide world — but feeling much relieved and almost normal again.

### LANDSCAPES AND WAR

*Sunday, April 22*

It was a beautiful evening, and after supper I went up on the hill and watched the sunset. I could see Dombasle, with some of its quaint red roofs still intact, resting peacefully in the fertile, green valley between the rolling hills that curved up on all sides, finally ending, westward, in the blue swell of the Argonne. White bands of roadway ran out of the little village, some rolling in wide curves, others running straight as arrows, and along these slowly moved long files of carts and tiny men. Across the horizon against the red sun was a road, bordered by toy trees, over which moved a lone team. The whole scene was as clearly outlined as though it were only a few yards away. . . . And all the while the booming and crashing of the big guns ripped up the peaceful quiet and turned a beautiful landscape into a troubled sea of war. After I returned to the room, we sat around the fire looking into the flames and talked in low voices of many things. It was a time of confidences, of the opening of jealously guarded secrets, of cherished ambitions. It is comforting also merely to gaze into the mysterious, leaping flames and let the mind run whither it will.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

April 25

TO-DAY was really my first experience under fire. I was tremendously excited — and to be frank, scared stiff. The chief emotion I recollect when the shell landed near me, was surprise and satisfaction that the great organization known as the German Army should have bothered to fire upon me. With a little exaggeration, it became a case of me vs. *Guillaume*. I feel very important.

Saturday, April 28

THE Commander of our Army, General Herr, — three stars and a stripe, — visited us and shook hands and spoke with each one of us. The “big bug” was a kindly old man with cavernous eyes. Our French Lieutenant was very nervous during the ceremony and hid a lighted pipe in his pocket. The General noticed something burning and called the Lieutenant’s attention to a big hole in the latter’s pocket. Which very much embarrassed said Lieutenant.

Sunday, April 29

Two new fellows arrived yesterday on the mail truck. The lads have been filled with as many stories as their credulity admits. We sowed *mitrailleuse* bullets in the walls of their room and spoke meaningly of aeroplane bombs and German sharpshooters.

Monday, April 30

AFTER lunch I had my hair cut at the *G.B.D.* I sat in a rickety old chair on a bale of burlap in a dirty little side room, while the barber clipped away with dull tools, and, nevertheless, did a very good job. Just as I was driving into Montzéville this evening two soldiers asked me to help them draw their *camion* out of the ditch into which the hind wheels had fallen. Of course I gladly assented and spent the best part of an hour trying to pull the truck out. We procured some wire, but it broke several times before we finally succeeded. By this time I was

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

mighty tired and I fell asleep almost as soon as I hit the hay. "Hay" is to be taken literally. During to-night's ride large rats kept scurrying across the road at intervals, giving me a great sense of companionship.

*Tuesday, May 1*

WE have discovered the difference between the French and German star-shells. The former explode when they reach the height of their trajectory and the stick part falls to the ground, leaving a little pin-prick of light that gradually grows into a ghastly green flare. The light is suspended from a parachute that remains in the air by virtue of the hot air generated by the flame and lasts about a minute. The Boche star-shells light on the way up and remain up only as long as it takes the torch to describe a long arching curve in the air.

*Saturday, May 5*

OUR *Chef*, Barton, and Richmond are leaving for Meaux, and we all feel very sad over losing three whom we all liked and respected. We gave a farewell dinner at which they all spoke, as did the new *Chef* Osborn and our French Lieutenant, Clark making an efficient and amusing toastmaster. It is really remarkable how close the Section has grown together since its formation and how genuine was the regret at the split. Red Clark carried a wounded German prisoner and was terribly bawled out for shaking hands with him.

### BRANCARDIERS AND POILUS

*Friday, May 18*

THE French *brancardier* is a kindly, sympathetic man who has been through the mill and come out strengthened in faith and understanding rather than hardened. He is probably the most lovable character I have met. So many of his kind seem like big children; but in time of stress, they show unsuspected depths of strength and coolness.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Sunday, May 20

IN the afternoon, most of the fellows went down to the coöperative field and played baseball with the English. I have had a long talk with a little *poilu* who did some laundry for me. He had a kindly face with twinkling eyes and humorous wrinkles, though lines of care are only too evident also. He is a simple farmer chap of no education. As for the war, he said he was mightily wearied of it all, but that he and every one of his countrymen would continue till the cause of right and humanity be won. I finished by entertaining a respect and admiration for the man that I cannot express. He was absolutely above anything that was small or mean; and I am beginning to realize that there are a lot of his comrades just like him.

Esnes, Tuesday, May 22

AFTER lunch I sat outside playing checkers with one of the *brancardiers*, when a shell landed just outside the yard and the *éclats* rattled against the château. We ducked for the *abri*, as three more fell uncomfortably close, one near my car and one in the graveyard. Though the *éclats* shot by my car on all sides, not a piece went through it, much to my disgust.

### AN ACCIDENT

Thursday, June 14

ALL the afternoon, I sat around in my car trying to read and basking in the hot sun. Suddenly I heard a loud explosion and looked up to see a soldier, whom I had noticed working among the ruins across the road, blown into a bloody heap. He got up, streaming blood from his chest and arms, and staggered down the street a few yards, when he collapsed again. The *brancardiers* rushed out and I got a stretcher from my car, while the *pharmacien* arranged a tourniquet for a severed artery in the man's arm. Then I hurried him to Ville, as fast as the wretched condition of the road would allow, where they told me he would live, but that his arm would have to be



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

amputated. The whole terrible drama was caused by the poor fellow having dropped a piece of tile on an old grenade.

*Saturday, June 16*

FOR some unaccountable reason our whole room was late to breakfast, and work in the garden as punishment being pretty well exhausted, we were forced to aid the *génie* down by the railroad. We slung huge logs around, piled planks, and in about two hours accomplished what the *génie* were accustomed to take a week to do. This latter gentry sat around smoking cigarettes in the shelter of a pile of timbers, and, with mildly curious and altogether satisfied eyes, watched us work. It was awfully hot business, and I was very glad when I got back and had a cold bath.

The Lieutenant tells me that the poor fellow who was hit by the grenade died shortly after his arm was amputated.

I am told that three men of the 143d Regiment have just been shot because they refused to fight and were stirring up trouble among the soldiers. Two men from every other company in the Division were compelled to witness the execution.

*Sunday, June 17*

THE cherries are ripe and hang in tiny red clusters that peep from under shiny leaves, affording pleasing contrast in color. The first hay of the season has been cut and its lingering fragrance still hangs over the stubbled meadows. The birds chirp in a rather listless sort of way and seem not to mind being drowned out by the lazy humming of bees and innumerable flies. Wandering through the tall, unkempt grass, one is apt to make the pleasing discovery of a row of rosebushes laden with heavy blossoms that alone mark the spot of a former garden, while everywhere one goes, one meets the piquant dash of brilliant red that denotes the poppy, standing boastfully forth

from the field of soft, mellow colors. The world hereabouts is a great fragrant garden inviting you with all its subtle influence to further investigate its beauties.

### GOOD-BYE TO MORT HOMME

*Sunday, June 24*

AFTER a very excellent meal, I prepared to do my last day's ambulance work here. My car was filled with *blessés* and *malades*, and I was about to crank it, when M. Charvet, the *pharmacien* at Esnes, told me that the Boches were firing on the "Corner" and that I had better hurry when I got there. I could see the cloud of black smoke hanging over it and every once in a while a new explosion boomed out. I felt that it was rather unnecessary to send the car out while the bombardment lasted, since I had no *grave* cases. But I could n't tell him that and so I started off with very decided misgivings. . . . After supper, when I was relieved, and reached the top of the hill for a last view of the familiar scene, I almost felt a sensation of affection for Mort Homme — now that we are leaving it.

*Wassy, Haute-Marne, Tuesday, June 26*

WE rose at five o'clock, made up our blanket-rolls, ate a wretched, uncooked breakfast, and were off by six o'clock with an astonishing lack of confusion and an equally amazing proximity to the time schedule. The squad system worked well. We took a direct route which included the towns of Ville, Jubécourt, Bar-le-Duc, Saint-Dizier, and Wassy. From the very start my car ran wretchedly and could not maintain the fast pace set by the convoy; so I had to travel close to the *camionnette* with Bailey in order to save time on the repair job. The Lieutenant and the *Médecin Chef*, who travelled with him, were much interested in my mishaps and even kept close to me in order not to miss any of the fun. Just outside of Bar-le-Duc I caught up again with the convoy and managed, by the exercise of great skill and persuasion, to stick with it the



THE NEIGHBOR OF OUR PASSY DAYS—THE CENTRE OF OUR WORLD



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

rest of the way. Near by in the fields where we stopped for lunch were several cherry trees laden with rich luscious fruit, and in a few moments we gathered enough to last the rest of the trip. At about 11 A.M. we arrived at Wassy, parked our cars, made a scanty meal at one of the cafés and spent the afternoon arranging our quarters. After supper I took a stroll and went to bed early.

### LIFE EN REPOS

*Wednesday, June 27*

WASSY is a quaint, beautiful little city of four thousand inhabitants. The small centralized area devoted to business is a tangled maze of clean, cobblestone streets, the other streets being wide and shady like a New England village. At present the town is very deserted, for the soldiers have not yet arrived, and the only people at home are old men, women, and children, who come out and gaze at us as though we were strange animals. We are the first Americans, except perhaps a few casual tourists, who have ever visited the place, and consequently we are the topic of the day. The little girls and boys follow us around everywhere, and when we stop, we are surrounded by an eager, curious crowd. These children are so well-behaved and lovable that we feel like adopting several on the spot. We worked all the morning washing our cars with the aid of hundreds of little urchins who insisted on going over with a dirty rag spots that we had just cleaned. Our cars are parked by the public square guarded by two soldiers, bayonets drawn, to protect them, I suppose, from the curious infants.

The river Blaise flows through the village in front of our camp, finally ending its journey in the Marne. A canal also traverses the place, and both of these streams have their source in a reservoir just outside of the town proper. We went swimming there this afternoon, as it was terribly hot, and absolutely had the time of our lives. The water was warm and clean, and we dived from a stone embankment into deep water, so there is no muddy bot-



tom to consider. Down in the fields below the embankment they were making hay, and the warm, sweet odor drifted up to us as we lay stretched out in a luxurious sunbath.

*Thursday, June 28*

OUR new quarters are in the second story of the grand château of the town, one that was formerly occupied by the Governor of the province and which dates back to 1700. The family lives on the first floor and rents the second to us. We have six rooms, all of them very large; so we are not at all cramped. There are three little children in the family and we have all fallen in love with them.

*Saturday, June 30*

AFTER supper, Bundy, Liddell, and I went up to see the *communiqué* posted outside the *mairie*. Returning, we stopped to talk with an old gentleman and his wife who were leaning through their parlor window that opened on the sidewalk. They were the most genuine, patriotic, lovable, kindly — except when they spoke of the Boches — and hospitable people I have ever known. In honor of the occasion, a new bottle of some mild *liqueur* was opened, and when we finally forced ourselves to leave, the old gentleman called us “*mes enfants*.”

*Tuesday, July 3*

FRAZER CLARK and I paid a visit to the Marquis de Mauroy to see his wonderful collection of meteors and minerals, the former being the best in the world. We met the Marquis on the street here in Wassy, and he invited us to come after lunch. Though almost an invalid he showed us his things personally with a great deal of pride in his collection, and was very kind and hospitable.

*The Fourth of July*

THE Wassy College invited us to dinner at the Hotel de la Gare, which proved to be very interesting and enjoyable.

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

We were each seated between two *étudiants* who insisted on speaking broken English, while we murdered the French language with our usual cheerful unconcern. At three o'clock we had a track meet with the soldiers in which we managed to win about everything, and after that a short exhibition of baseball, ending up the afternoon with a soccer game with the French soldiers, which we won, 6 to 4. The features of the day were the huge crowds of people, their enthusiasm and the evidences of their friendly feeling for us. It was very thrilling to find such hospitality and welcome so far away from home.

### BACK TO VERDUN

*Trémont, Wednesday, August 1*

WE arrived at this little village in time to arrange our quarters before lunch, in a huge, garish château that was evidently the pride of the town. I have an immense feather-bed to myself. A shallow brook five feet wide flows along the main street and in this brook all the washing is done. On the top of one of the neighboring hills, we found a fine level field for baseball, which we played all the afternoon.

*Saturday, August 4*

STARTLING news! We leave to-morrow morning! Frantic eleventh-hour repairs and packing occupied the evening.

*August 5*

As we watched, three planes descended, swooping down in wide circles and making spectacular dives and turns for the benefit of the crowds of soldiers who stood gazing up with us. The sun was just setting and on each downward circle the machines were blackly silhouetted against the glowing crimson clouds in the west. . . . It made one catch one's breath.

*Juvécourt, Monday, August 6*

WE went to bed early, as the lights have to be turned out at nine o'clock on account of enemy aeroplanes. The

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

woods are full of artillery, wheel to wheel — the most stupendous massing of guns the officers have ever seen. We hear the continual sound of cannon.

*Wednesday, August 8*

WE went to-day with a *camion* to Vadelaincourt to get *ravitaillement*. The activity and ordered confusion that covered the road and all the countryside we could see were proof of the importance of this sector. Thousands of *camions* passed us. We played baseball in the afternoon.

*Thursday, August 9*

ALMOST half the Section was called out this morning. The traffic on the road was worse than yesterday.

*Tuesday, August 14*

LAST night at La Claire, beyond Fromeréville, a good deal of shelling was going on, when a "130" burst near our staff car, *éclats* wounding Dominic Rich and Earl Osborn, who were quickly taken to Vadelaincourt.

*Wednesday, August 15*

APPARENTLY, the Section is not at all worried by the casualties, for life goes on as usual in every way. We make pilgrimages to Vadelaincourt in squads of four to visit our *blessés*. There was a terrific bombardment last night and all day. Playing baseball in the afternoon, I sprained my ankle and have to limp around with a cane.

*Thursday, August 16*

THE whole campaign of action has been mapped out to us on secret army maps so that we know pretty much what is to take place. Forty more prisoners were marched by to-day and Jimmy got a hat, while Frazer cut off an iron-cross ribbon.

*Saturday, August 18*

I HAD a very interesting conversation with a soldier-priest touching the vital points of religion, especially in

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

its relation to those going into battle. We watched battalions of the 31st Infantry go by in their light attacking order, with a small blanket-roll and no pack. The priest remarked that many of the soldiers had new uniforms and overcoats so that they "might be well-dressed to die." Later, however, he said that no matter how much a Frenchman may complain and mutter, he always fights like a hero when the test comes. These men going into battle were so downcast and serious-looking that I could not force a smile of good-cheer, for visions of what was before them. They offered quite a contrast to the Moroccans who went up singing and joking like boisterous children.

*Ramfont, Sunday, August 19*

WE had breakfast at seven o'clock and immediately after broke camp. It was a long, hard task for there was much to do and the day was enervating. The Section has accumulated so much material that it took three voyages of the White to finish up things. Our new quarters are on the hill above the town. We have not a great deal of room, but there is a grassy stretch where we have pitched our tents. The French anti-aircraft guns shot down a Boche *avion* near here this afternoon. A crowd of Moroccans rushed to the scene and were all for tearing the German to pieces; in fact, it was only the intervention of a general that saved him. "Tex" Jones, in a long raincoat and goggles, with a handkerchief over his nose against the dust, also hurried to the spot, and was almost knocked down himself before the Moroccans discovered that he was not the Boche. The machine was quickly broken up into souvenirs.

### THE ATTACK

*Monday, August 20*

MY first call came at eleven o'clock last night, and since then I have n't had time to eat or sleep. The attack started at four o'clock this morning. My pulses were

pounding away with excitement as I turned up the old Montzéville road, and the noise of the roaring guns grew louder and louder, till finally I reached the crest of the hill and the whole stunning effect of sight and sound burst upon me. Guns exploding on all sides of me — huge nightmarish things that shook the very ground; dugouts with men standing around laughing and joking; I remember now how the contrast struck me — the light casualness of these men and the hellishness of the scene around them. The attack had gone famously and the enthusiasm was contagious. I became conscious of nothing but an overwhelming desire to shout and yell. The day was brilliant and sunshiny; it seemed like a holiday. I started back with my wounded, determined to return as soon as possible in order not to miss any of the show; what then was my anger and disappointment when I was forced to wait half an hour to unload! The second time at *poste* I got a Boche helmet from a very attractive-looking prisoner. I finished out my twenty-four hours' duty with a trip to Chaumont. During the day our Section alone carried over 700 wounded, covering a distance of 2000 kilometres. I carried 55 men, went over 350 kilometres, and used 50 litres of gas. I was fairly well tired out when at length I was able to tumble into bed and forget the war for a while.

*Wednesday, August 22*

LAST night a German aeroplane bombed the Vadelaincourt hospital and worked terrible havoc among the wounded, including many of their own. It was a frightful deed, done apparently in cold blood. I made a trip from Jubécourt to Vadelaincourt, and had a very interesting conversation on the way over with a Dutchman of the Foreign Legion. He said that 460 of his countrymen had enlisted at the beginning of the war, only 40 of whom remained. His words showed what a marvellous *esprit de corps* the Legion had built up. Every man is proud of its reputation and would rather die than in any way harm it. It has never once failed to obtain its objective.



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

*Clares-Chênes, Thursday, August 23*

AFTER supper, I went on duty at Claires-Chênes and immediately was sent to Chaumont with one man — a badly wounded Moroccan. These Moroccans are wonderful fighters, but when they are wounded, they cry and suffer out loud like children — untaught to conceal their emotions. This poor fellow cried out all the way in spite of all my efforts to prevent jars. It was a fearful experience, for there was nothing I could do to help him except continue.

*Clares-Chênes, Saturday, September 1*

I MADE several trips last night, which gave me an opportunity to revolve in my mind all the troubled impressions caused by my reading of last evening and before. It was a beautiful night with a clear, calm moon that made all human problems seem futile and unnecessary. On one trip a sergeant of the Foreign Legion sat with me on the front seat, and during the ride talked cheerfully on various matters, though his head was entirely bandaged. On reaching Vadelaincourt, I put my hand on the side box while alighting and it came away dripping with blood, while the faint glimmer from the *Attente des Couchés* sign showed a pool of blood stretching several feet on the mud-guard. . . . There was the answer to the moon.

### A NEW CANTONMENT — BOMBING

*Jouy, Sunday, September 2*

AT 5 P.M. I proceeded to our new cantonment at this place. It is located in the woods of a steep slope rising on the north side of the village. The fellows had worked well, and numerous tents, cleverly placed to avoid detection by aeroplanes, gleamed through the trees. It is a pleasant, roomy sort of a spot, though the guns sound uncomfortably close, and occasionally the sharp whine of a shell tells of a near-by battery that makes the whole place a target.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*Jouy, Wednesday, September 5*

LAST night German aviators dropped bombs all night long. The most terrible effect was the destruction in the hospital at Vadelaincourt, where I stopped on the way back this afternoon. One bomb landed in the officers' barrack, killing instantly the *Médecin Chef* and two officers. The other three landed in different parts of the wards, working terrible destruction, as the *éclats* left no building untouched. The casualties were chiefly among the personnel. Three nurses were badly wounded and a doctor was killed with the patient he was operating upon. It was a truly frightful spectacle, one that made the onlooker forget any sense of humanity in an overwhelming desire to crush a people whose doctrines sanction deeds like that; for there is no doubt that the thing was done in cold blood.

*Jouy, Saturday, September 8*

TO-DAY and last night I made about seven trips. The cannonading on the right bank of the Meuse was terrific all night. I spent the afternoon in taxi service getting delicacies for a banquet that the *Médecin Chef* at Claires-Chênes is giving to the French Lieutenant on the occasion of his *Croix de Guerre*. At Rarécourt, we — Lieutenant Rubait and I — went into a *pâtisserie* to buy *éclairs* and before we left we had either bought or eaten almost the entire stock.

*Monday, September 10*

LAST night was a little too nerve-racking. About midnight we were awakened by the crash of two shells, one on top of the other, somewhere down in the orchard between the cars and the village. We were just about congratulating ourselves on the conclusion of the *strafe*, when two more shells landed so near that *éclats* whistled through the trees. At that, all dignity broke down and there was one mad, trampling rush for the trench. Ryan's bed was in the entrance and about fifteen fellows walked over him before he had a chance to escape. I found myself in the trench

## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

with one shoe and my sheepskin coat on. Somebody stepped on my unprotected foot with praiseworthy energy, though I felt it to be somewhat out of place under the circumstances. No more shells came, however, and wit began to make itself heard, until finally the party broke up as a sort of lark. All day I have been limping around on my bad foot.

*Claire-Chênes, Friday, September 14*

THE tricolor at the gate is struggling manfully against the beating rain. It flaps painfully from side to side, slower and slower, and now seems about to give up and hang dead. But every time a new impulse appears to spring through it, for up it struggles again, fluttering in dogged resistance against the downpour. And, somehow, I feel cheered at the sight of this sacred emblem of France, so worthily emulating its people.

### A VISIT TO MORT HOMME

*Poste 232, Wednesday, September 19*

AFTER breakfast I was standing outside the *poste* enjoying the morning sun when Sergeant Marcel came along and invited me to a ramble on Mort Homme. I naturally jumped at the opportunity and asked for and received the necessary permission from Chaussard. The morning was bright, but hazy, thus preventing efficient artillery observation, and consequently we were able to avoid the *boyau* and take the open path. So we tramped beside the trench for some distance till we came to a supply station, where we branched off on to what had once been a road, but which is now so spotted with shell-holes that I could hardly believe Marcel when he said the artillery caissons traversed it easily. Here we saw some sturdy little bobsleds which are used in wet weather, and passed batteries, support trenches, then the former third line, barbed wire, the second line, more barbed wire, and finally the old first line. There were many shell-holes all about, but the trenches were in excellent condition, with the excep-

tion of the first line which was battered in places. We now crossed No Man's Land, past *chevaux-de-frise* hastily thrown aside to open up a pathway for the attacking troops, and came on to — imagine if you can the interior of a volcano, the smoke-blasted sides, the tumbled heaps of stuff thrown up, the yellow, scarred appearance; or picture an angry yellow sea running in mountainous swells and covered with smaller waves and troughs. We were in a sort of pocket formed by the first slopes of Mort Homme rising on three sides; and here had been the German lines, Marcel told me. But I saw nothing, nothing except the most frightful cataclysm I shall ever see. We had left the road now and were on a narrow path running along the crest of enormous, gaping holes; past twisted, useless barbed wire, and occasionally along half-submerged sap entrances from which drifted a faint, acrid odor. The French have cleaned up the place well since the attack, but I saw some gruesome sights. An innocent-looking bundle of rags more than once turned out to hold remains of a man. A shoe with a foot and sometimes a leg in it was a common occurrence, and once I noticed a skull. Grenades, body armor, helmets, gas-masks, and everything imaginable, lay strewn all about.

Presently we entered a trench which was at first shallow, but which suddenly deepened into a strong, well-protected thoroughfare that took us over the crest of Mort Homme. Here of a sudden Marcel drew me into a sap just in time to avoid the Colonel of the 80th, for my presence could hardly be explained. This sap, which had been built by the Germans, was of strong and of most curious design. It had so little head-room that the only way to enter it, as far as I could see, was by crawling backwards on hands and knees. After proceeding a little farther along the trench, Marcel turned into an *abri* and then through a curtained doorway into a little box of a room — the observation post, where, through a narrow slit, I could look down into a valley from which rose, on the near side, the rather steep slope of Mort Homme cov-



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

ered with shattered trees. The French trenches ran very near, just below me, and the German ones showed very plainly in front of the Bois de Forges, the two being separated by over a kilometre, due to the marshy quality of the low ground. On the way back, we stopped at a telephone station to see a friend of Marcel's and were conducted down a very long sap into a stuffy chamber where we were received with the hospitality and grace of a drawing-room. The telephonist made chocolate for us, apologized for the lack of room with an ease and poise that made me quite forget my surroundings. I was quite tired out when we finally reached the *poste*, for we had gone over eight kilometres.

### TO THE CHAMPAGNE

*Vaubécourt, Saturday, October 6*

WE left Jouy at 9 A.M. to-day and Section Thirty-One took our place. We reached this village at 11 A.M. The kitchen trailer was delayed, so we went forth in search of food. After many rebuffs and failures, four of us found ourselves in the back room of a tumble-down house that we reached by going through a stable and up three steps. The room was bare, but very clean, and with a cheerful fire burning on a wide hearth. Two old women served us with fried potatoes, cider, and pears, which, added to the tins of meat and huge loaf of bread and cheese we had bought, made a very substantial meal. The women told us a pathetic story of the vandalism and wanton destruction of the Huns when they occupied the village before the Battle of the Marne. All the furniture and goods were transported to Germany and the houses were then burned. The English, with customary thoroughness, gave to each of the inhabitants of the destroyed villages around here a bed, some clothes, a rooster, a hen and a cow.

*Chantrix, Tuesday, October 9*

WE left this morning for the Champagne sector, having been transferred to the Fourth Army. We were stopped



at the first village beyond Vaubécourt to make way for a party of notables including President Poincaré, Marshal Joffre, and the President of Portugal. We lined up by the roadside while the automobiles wheeled by, and every one acknowledged our formation, President Poincaré raising his hat completely and accompanying it with a short bow. We reached this village at 4 P.M. I slept the night in my car. The church here rings out the hours with a bell that is the exact counterpart of the Andover chapel bell.

*Prosnes, Sunday, November 4*

THERE is a cemetery near here of more than two hundred soldiers, ten to twenty in a grave. These graveyards are everywhere, with occasional black crosses conspicuous by the absence of the tricolor cockade; they mark the resting-place of Germans. After supper I got a hurry call to Petite Haie where were two very *graves blessés*, both suffering from the most painful wound possible — leg fracture. Returning, I missed the sharp turn outside of Prosnes and took the road that runs off to the left toward Baconnes. After going about three kilometres, I became worried at not finding La Plaine and finally stopped and asked my whereabouts. I went through awful mental agony, emphasized each moment by the tortured cries of the poor fellows in back, both fully conscious, and aware, I had no doubt, of my mistake and my fatal helplessness. The horror, the agony of that ride will rest graven on my mind. I asked the doctor if the extra fifteen minutes in my car would have made any difference and he assured me no. Both men died at one o'clock that same morning.

*Wednesday, November 7*

I SPENT the greater part of the afternoon at bridge, writing, and talking with the telephonist. I learned that the *corps de santé* has an informal code that is used over the telephone in case the Boches should overhear what is said. Thus, an automobile is a *bidon*; a wounded man,



HILLSIDE TRENCHES IN THE SNOWS OF CHAMPAGNE



NEAR HEXEN-WEG IN THE VALLEYS OF THE "MONTS," CHAMPAGNE



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

*une catégorie*; a dead man, *une planche*, etc. The new *abri* at Bouleaux has just been finished and is by far the most comfortable of all those of the front-line *postes*. You enter it from a trench near the road and go down twenty-four steps, which brings the little room at the bottom just under the road, so that wagons and men passing overhead make a curious noise a little like the scuffling of rats. In this little box there is just place for three bunks, cut out of the pure white chalk. The absence of rats and *totos* is noticeable and worthy of mention.

### A COUP DE MAIN

*Tuesday, November 13*

GREENWOOD apparently has some very secret "dope," as he has told us flatly that there is to be a large *coup de main* by the French on Thursday morning and that he expects to call all cars out. One battalion of the 101st Regiment is going to make the attack.

*La Plaine, Wednesday, November 14*

TO-NIGHT I feel as though I could do anything, and yet I sit here in luxury while other poor fellows are thinking of morn when they are going to risk their lives — for what? What does it matter if the Germans win? We will forget it on the morrow. But no! I know why it matters and I feel I am not doing enough. The trenches are a great melting-pot from which emerges all the good purged of the evil. To-morrow morning at five o'clock Bill and I are going to Constancelager to carry away those brave fellows who are waiting now, thinking . . . I don't know what I think.

*Thursday, November 15*

WE rose in the darkness, and after a hasty breakfast set forth. The morning was unexpectedly mild and so misty that I found it difficult to keep Bill's car in sight. It grew light rapidly and by the time we arrived at Prat, the gaunt plain was easily visible. All was quiet and peaceful,

but I realized how deceptive it was when I thought of the inferno about to break forth. I was waiting with ears strained to catch the first sound when I learned that the *coup de main* had been postponed till to-morrow morning.

*Constance Lager, Friday, November 16*

WE started out again in exactly the same way as yesterday, except that just as I backed my car into the shelter at Prat, it happened. The din was tremendous. The sky showed streaks of crimson in the east, over the dead, peaceful countryside, and birds were singing in the air. But the inferno on the hills yonder only increased. However, the *coup de main* was an absolute failure. I carried two terrible head cases.

*Reims, Monday, November 19*

I HAVE been struck by the careless way in which an inventory is made of the dead man's effects. To me it is such a sacred, touching office. The crowd of *brancardiers* are as boyish as we are. They laugh and joke like a lot of school-boys, which is nothing short of marvellous considering the depressing effect of their lives. How I admire them!

*Dillman, Wednesday, November 21*

AT 11 P.M. I was awakened and given a *couché* to take to Châlons; so I visited the American canteen at the station. It is a marvellous place with hundreds of *brancards* for the soldiers to sleep on, arranged in groups according to the destinations of the soldiers who may thus be awakened in time for their train. There are reading-rooms, shower-baths, an outdoor garden, and a huge refectory where one may buy simple, extraordinarily cheap food served with the efficiency of a modern American quick-lunch counter. The big rooms are quaintly and cleverly decorated and furnished with indirect lighting. The kitchen is a model establishment. But chief of all attractions, for me at least, were the pleasant American women in charge. I talked for a long time with a very attractive lady before I could finally tear myself away.



## SECTION FIFTEEN

---

### LIFE AND COMFORT AT THE FRONT

*Sunday, December 2*

WOKE at eight o'clock to find a broad beam of sunlight across the foot of my bed. What a glorious day! Clear, limitless blue overhead, sunlight on the green firs, a wind bringing air like wine that sends the blood tingling through the veins. From the observation tower the whole city of Reims was plainly visible. What a wonderful thing to be alive!

*Haie Claire, Monday, December 3*

ARRIVED here for the night, I followed my guide into a maze of trenches, one of which ended in a wide entrance to the *poste*, sloping downward with short, regular steps and plenty of head-room, unlike any other *abri* I have ever seen. At the foot is a broad archway cut out of pure chalk and then comes the door of the main room of the *poste*. What a surprise to find a blazing fire crackling on a hearth in the opposite wall, throwing ruddy reflections on the whitewashed walls and filling the place with warmth and comfort. The *Médecin Chef* lounged on a bench with his slippered feet on the hearth, and several *brancardiers* were talking in an undertone in a corner. A more peaceful, homelike spot would be hard to find. From another wing of the *abri* floated softly the sound of a flute and men's voices in chorus. The *Médecin Chef* nodded his head in approval. "It keeps the men happy," he said. Reluctantly I broke away from the warm fire and crept into my narrow bunk.

*Constancelager, Sunday, December 9*

I TOOK a walk with an *aspirant* who spoke English and who led me through a maze of trenches, all labelled with picturesque names. We passed officers' quarters, very cosy and comfortable, with smoke betraying the warmth within, soldiers grouped about a table playing cards, messengers hurrying along, the postman with letters and

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

newspapers, soldiers working on new *boyaux* or *abris* or repairing *fil de fer*; in fact, all the ordinary aspects of trench existence which is now so perfect that a system of trenches is a busy, humming community, with its main streets, and alleys, its tenement row and its "Fifth Avenue," its church, its hospital, and its store.

### WINTER — THE CLOSE OF 1917

*Haie Claire, Monday, December 17*

SNOW! We woke to a world absolutely transformed. Snow on the little huts, on the trees, glistening on the ground, and the air crisp and tingling. On account of the danger of aeroplanes taking pictures of tracks in the snow, we had to cross the open places on a single path, and, in the big level place in front, the cars have to use one track only.

*La Plaine, Christmas, 1917*

WE went wood-gathering beyond Thuizy in a forest of huge first-growth hardwood trees. Shells had done awful damage there. The magnificent trees were shattered and torn and thrown into all kinds of fantastic positions. One giant maple remained practically intact, with a tiny observation post riddled by *éclats* hidden away up at the top, perhaps a hundred feet in the air. The ground was torn up by the shells, and fallen branches lay around knee-deep, which added greatly to the difficulty of our work.

*La Plaine, Monday, December 31*

AND so this is the end of 1917, — the most thrilling, most inspiring, most profoundly influencing year of my life. I look back on it with a certain amount of satisfaction tinged with awe and wonder.

JEROME PRESTON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Lexington, Massachusetts; Harvard, '19; entered the American Field Service in February, 1917, and served with Section Fifteen throughout the war. The above are extracts from a diary.

## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION FIFTEEN was enlisted in the United States Army at Jouy-en-Argonne as Section Six-Thirty-Three. About November 1, 1917, it moved to La Plaine, in the region of the "Mounts" in the Champagne district. During this winter period there was no particular action along the front, the principal thing of interest being speculation as to when and where the Germans would pull their much-heralded "kolossal" offensive. On January 15, 1918, the Section went *en repos* in this district, coming back again to the lines at Mourmelon-le-Grand, in the same region, but a different sector.

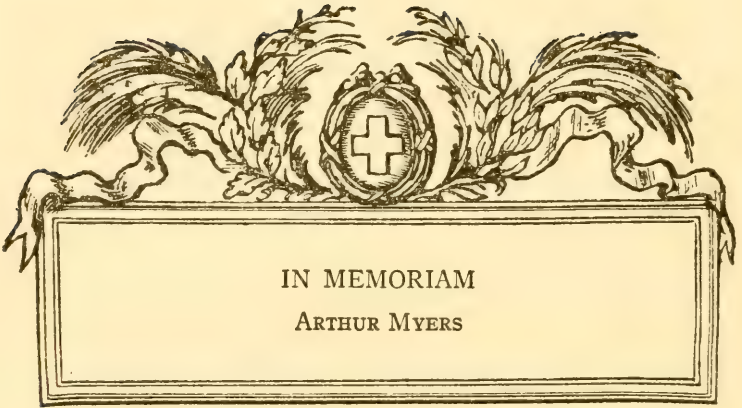
Section Fifteen, after the army took it over, almost qualifies for the title of the "One Sector Section." It remained here in the Champagne, in this immediate neighborhood, sometimes shifting to one or the other of the near-by "Mounts" sectors, but never going far away, until July 20. From the 15th of March until the 1st of April its Division experienced a number of small but annoying diversion attacks, usually accompanied by gas. At these times there were fairly heavy evacuations from Prosnes, Ferme de Moscou, and Constantine. The Section was cited in April for its work during these gas attacks.

During Ludendorff's famous "Friedensturm" offensive in the Champagne, from July 15 to July 17, the work of the Section was very heavy. The main part of the action here stopped abruptly after the counter-attack of July 18 on the Soissons-Château-Thierry front. For its work during this defensive the Section was cited to the Order of the Army.

Finally, on October 5, the Section moved to the front near Suippes, in the Champagne. It took part in General Gouraud's attack here, advancing steadily with its Division to and across the Aisne at Vouziers, and was still going forward when the Armistice stopped operations. For its work in this last attack it was again cited.

After the Armistice it remained for some time at Montigny, moving on to Charleville, Brussels, and finally taking up a more or less permanent position at Grevenbroich, Germany. It was ordered in to Base Camp on the 27th of February, 1919, and sailed from Brest for home during the first week in April.

JEROME PRESTON



## *Section Sixteen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. FRANKLIN D. W. GLAZIER

II. ALPHEUS EDWARD SHAW

III. JAMES H. LEWIS

IV. MARSHAL G. PENFIELD



## SUMMARY

SECTION SIXTEEN left Paris at the end of the third week of April, 1917. It went to Rarécourt, in the Verdun-Argonne sector, and in this sector it remained for nearly six months, working about Grange-le-Compte and the *poste* of Bon Abri. Its greatest activity was during and after the successful Verdun offensive in August of that year. Just before the end of its history it moved to Corbeil, back of Vitry-le-François, for a *repos*, and there became Section Six-Thirty-Four of the U.S. Army Ambulance Service.



## *Section Sixteen*

Finish'd the days, the clouds dispell'd,  
The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication,  
When lo! reborn, high o'er the European world,  
(In gladness answering thence, as face afar to face,  
reflecting ours, Columbia,)  
Again thy star, O France, fair lustrous star,  
In heavenly peace, clear, more bright than ever,  
Shall beam immortal.

WALT WHITMAN

### I

#### BEGINNING WORK AT VERDUN

SECTION SIXTEEN's history may be described almost as a single operation. Its work during the five months before it was taken over by the American Army lay in one sector and was connected during the entire time with the August, 1917, offensive about Verdun.

The Section was composed entirely of men who had come to France before America entered the war, and the bond that united them, from the very outset, was their love for France. Though drawn from every part of their own country — from half a dozen universities and twice that number of colleges and schools — almost at

once there sprang up among us an idealistic spirit, which made us a unit. So, because of this spirit, drudgery became rather a play and discomfort less hard to bear. The men saw the good in each other and grew strangely tolerant. Danger became vastly less important than getting to a *poste*, and never once was there hesitation in going where ordered; never once was there a second call for volunteers.

At the end of the third week of April, 1917, Section Sixteen left Paris. The early morning departure from the park of "21" was delayed for a special inspection by M. Justin Godart, the Assistant Secretary of War, and hence the first night on the road came at Montmirail, a black, seething backwater of the Champagne offensive then at its height. Next day came Châlons, and night at Fains, with no accidents beyond blow-outs. The feeling of war was now in the cold, spring air which made this homely village, with its high, sheltering hills, seem very friendly. A day's waiting for orders, a day full of rumors and guesses, followed, and ended suddenly by Hyde, the *Sous-chef*, and myself being sent ahead to Rarécourt to learn the country from Section Four which we were destined to relieve.

This country was a vast stretch of rolling, fertile upland. To the west lay the valley of the Aire and the dark line of the Argonne from which the pine-clad promontory of Clermont jutted out into the plain. Toward the north the land rose to a line of hills covered by the Forest of Hesse, while eastward it stretched away to the Hauts-de-Meuse south of Verdun. Here and there in the valleys lay tiny villages; squat, stone-faced cottages huddled about slate-roofed church spires, some of them almost intact and still inhabited, others a desolation of crumbling walls.

Rarécourt itself, from its bridge across the Aire, straggles up to its church on the hilltop, and there by the church were the Section's headquarters, barracks, mess-room, officers' quarters, and the repair-shop. From there, in accordance with the French system, the cars ran up

## SECTION SIXTEEN

---

eighteen kilometres to the front, either by the straight white road through the Aire Valley, or winding up over the hills to the Forest of Hesse, to bring back the wounded to the divisional sorting-hospital, where other cars carried those who could be moved to specialized hospitals, or to the rail-head twelve kilometres farther south.

The work at first was very light. Six men with their ambulances were always at the advanced *postes*, whence they could be called by telephone to the dressing-stations near the lines; two men with cars were stationed at the sorting-hospital; and three for police, water, and provisions. The forward *postes* were greatly in demand. The sector Avocourt-Vauquois-Boureuilles was very quiet. Only occasional shells came in. Almost imperceptibly, however, the work increased, until by June the road took on a new life. Batteries of guns began moving up, and long convoys of ammunition trucks passed continuously. At the end of the month, the Germans attacked at Hill 304, just to the right.

### CELEBRATION ON THE FOURTH

At such a moment no one in the Section was willing to take advantage of the Fourth-of-July leave, and in appreciation of this General Collin gave us all to ourselves an Independence Day *Fête*, with a regimental band, champagne, etc., and we had as guests men from the neighboring sections, Seventeen, Nineteen, and Twenty-Six. We put two big tents end to end, with flaps up and the American and French flags flying from the pole. The fellows worked like beavers rooting up red poppies, blue cornflowers, and white lilies, which we tied to the tent-poles that were also adorned with bunches of cherries to be had for the picking. Besides about fifty Americans, various chaplains and military doctors were also present, while the General Staff sent one of its captains. So it was a very good party, with the "*Marseillaise*," "Star-Spangled Banner," and decent weather thrown in. After the feast, the General talked to the fellows and went through the

cantonment which was in apple-pie order. The Boches, I should add, supplied the fireworks, but did not get any thing out of it in return.

This *Fête* marked the end of light work. A week later the Section left Rarécourt and moved up two miles nearer the lines, going into quarters in a huge stone barn, which the Boches had found the range of the day before. They continually shelled the lane leading to it. Every night the roads were alive with batteries moving up to the forest and each day they were shelled farther back. The men at the forward *postes* no longer sat in their cars, but as soon as they arrived scooted into dugouts. Calls for wounded sometimes meant lying in a ditch by the roadside until shelling stopped and the *blessés* could be brought up. Sometimes a dead stop came with a jerk just before a yawning crater where the road had been, and this meant a long *détour* in order to reach the *poste*.

### RAIN — PREPARING FOR THE ATTACK

AT this period it rained incessantly for three weeks and the roads became swamps of clay spotted with shell-holes and churned by the wheels of heavy guns. With the rain, the Germans began throwing in gas-shells; but, nevertheless, the men at the front *postes* drove steadily all night, and the number of cars on call and at the sorting-hospital had to be doubled. The roads in the forest were, too, continuously under fire, and every other day a new car returned with holes made by shell fragments. Yet no man was wounded.

Daily for a week the cannonading grew more intense. Dead horses and twisted *camions* were left along the road, proofs of the disorder that reigned there. In the dust and the darkness, under the crash of guns and through the poison mist of gas, the drivers took their cars up and brought the wounded back, while the mechanics, sometimes at headquarters, sometimes at the front, kept the Fords in repair, replacing a wheel shot away here, and a differential pierced by a shell fragment there, or righting





EVEN THIS—"POUR LA PATRIE!"



THE CANAL NEAR MONTGRIGNON



## SECTION SIXTEEN

---

a car lying crumpled in the ditch where a charging *camion* had sent it. But the strain and suspense only grew.

Then, on August 20, the attack came. Our Division was at the extreme left, its rôle being principally of an artillery nature. But at Avocourt our infantry moved forward, and through Avocourt the German prisoners began coming in. The forest fairly rocked with the concussion of French guns which each day lengthened their range; and each day, too, marked a further advance on our right. And our work grew heavier; Bowie was wounded and received the *Croix de Guerre*. A dugout two of our men had just left was gouged out and the shelter for the *piquet* cars destroyed. The "*Tournant de la Mort*" deserved its name. The "*Rendez-vous de Chasse*" became "Death Hunting-Ground," and the "*Carrefour de Santé*" was the "Cross-Road of Desolation." Even the Section's headquarters were shelled and three Frenchmen killed there, while *avions* made darkness a nightmare. Yet the cars made their rounds as regularly as in the calm days of early spring, made their rounds and pushed closer to the lines, down into Avocourt itself, and out that long white road where there was only wire between them and the German lines.

But little by little conditions grew quieter, the shelling less frequent, and fewer cars were called out. The change was coming, and by mid-September the old Section began to be revolutionized. Their enlistment completed, eleven men left to go into other services or to return to America, and by the end of the month we had gone back *en repos* near Vitry-le-François.

No history of this Section would be complete without mention of our foreign personnel, those first-class Frenchmen, Manuel the cook, Louis Coudray, Auburn, Dogorn, and Blondet, the *brigadiers* Noguès and Boyer, and Grain the postman. Nor shall we ever forget our French officer, Second Lieutenant Delaballe, and the *maréchaux des logis*, Bardon, Job, and de Saussey.

To countless memories, of darkness and discomfort, of

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

danger and suffering and death, must be added those of sunlight and the long summer twilight on Clermont Hill, of section banquets and swimming in the Aire, of friendships won and the gratification of work well done, marked by the carrying of thousands of wounded. All this makes the story of Section Sixteen mean volumes to us.

FRANKLIN D. W. GLAZIER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Glastonbury, Connecticut; Yale, '04; joined the Field Service in March, 1917, serving as *Chef* of Section Sixteen; subsequently a First Lieutenant of Engineers, U.S. Army, and Liaison Officer.



## II

### NOTES OF THE WORK

*Rarécourt, June 24, 1917*

THIS sector of the front (the Argonne) which our Section is serving is a comparatively quiet one. The men are longing for more exciting work or a change. There are two *postes* at the front where we keep cars stationed day and night, and three more where we are liable to be called at any time. Our cantonment is about eight miles from the front, so we hear the guns plainly and see the star shells at night. For sleeping quarters we have a standard French cantonment of wooden barracks, while we eat in a near-by house. Like most of the other sections, we think we have the best French cook in the army.

The other day, two of our fellows had a rather exciting experience at the thirty-six-hour *poste*, which is located in the cellar of a ruined house in a village about a mile from the lines. The vault of the cellar is well made, and, having been strengthened by the addition of about four feet of stones, it would probably stand even a "155." These two fellows started out for a short walk about the town, when, having explored the deserted houses to their satisfaction, they sat down on a concrete watering-trough in the centre of the village, where was a sign that read: "Do not remain here because you are in plain sight of the enemy." However, neither of them thought there was any danger because the Germans were not in the habit of shelling the town. For perhaps fifteen minutes they talked and listened to the usual sounds of the front, such as the *départs* and *arrivées*, when a French observation plane flew overhead toward the German lines and high-explosives began breaking around it. Suddenly they heard a whirring, whistling sound which came toward them with startling rapidity. Instinct told them to get close to the



ground; so they tried to get under the watering-trough. The shell passed directly over their heads and exploded down by the old mill, about two hundred feet away. Without any remarks, they got up, made a dash for the good old cellar, and there, in its security, heard thirty-five shells land in the town, one of which fell squarely on the roof of the *abri*, but did no damage. When it was all over, the fellows agreed that perhaps the Frenchman who put up that "No Loitering" sign knew what he was about.

*Rarécourt, July 5*

YESTERDAY, being the Fourth, we had quite a celebration. Tables were set for the following menu: ham sandwiches, several kinds of cakes and cookies, champagne, beer, cigars and cigarettes. This lunch took place at 4 P.M. In the evening at 7 the Section had a wonderful dinner in the tents. The menu included peach pie.

*Bon Abri, July 13*

LAST night the doctor with whom we eat seemed greatly depressed and said that he had no appetite for supper. We asked him what was the matter and he answered that he had just assisted at the burial of ten Frenchmen, all of whom he had treated and cared for. One would think that an army surgeon would have come to regard death as a matter of course, but underneath they must be just as tender-hearted as the rest of us.

*Grange-le-Comte, July 19*

WE have moved our Headquarters from the town where we were to an old château situated about a mile from here. The château proper is occupied by the General and his staff, while we have the theatre. The seats have been removed, but the stage is intact: a rather odd place to live in. One of our fellows received a large box of shredded wheat biscuits from home yesterday, so our breakfasts are somewhat more sumptuous.

## SECTION SIXTEEN

---

August 18

OUR "quiet sector" has livened up quite a bit the past few days. The artillery action increases daily and we are having plenty of work and excitement. One fellow, last night on duty at *Bon Abri*, had his car riddled by *éclats*, which pierced the body in about twenty places. Also a big shell exploded in the middle of the road, about three hundred feet ahead of two of the fellows who were going out to a *poste*, and stones and earth came down on the top of the car, but hurt nobody. In consequence, the road was blocked for several hours. Four of our fellows who were out at one of the *postes* also experienced a gas attack last night. The Germans shot in a large number of gas-shells and the woods were filled with the gas for several hours.

August 26

OUR Section was just on the edge of the recent French attack at Mort Homme, and we had much work and excitement. Several cars were hit, but no one was injured. One of our cars brought in some wounded Germans. One among their number spoke English, and the first thing he wanted to know was, "How many Americans are there in France?" During the attack the Germans tried to cut the roads by using very large shells, which, when they hit, did cut it effectively, making a hole about ten feet deep and twenty feet across.

September 10

A FEW days ago the Germans bombarded the railroad which runs within forty feet of our cantonment. Some of the shells came very near us and we had to take to the woods. To provide a shelter in case of such bombardments, we have been ordered to dig some trenches in a field near our barracks. It is hard work, but when we get them finished, they will be a safe place during bombardments. The Germans have a new long-range gun opposite us, and they try it out every afternoon. Natu-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

rally, the work on our trenches is progressing rapidly under this new stimulus.

I have said that we are quartered in a theatre. Last night we had a treat. The General, who lives next door, has a moving-picture machine and eight reels of pictures. He loaned them to us and we enjoyed a real movie. The pictures were small, but very clear. All this seemed very appropriate in a theatre.

ALPHEUS EDWARD SHAW <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Wilmington, Vermont; Harvard, '17; served with Section Sixteen, and as a Sergeant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war. The above are clippings from a personal journal.



### III

#### NOTES FROM POSTE AND EN REPOS

*At Poste "Bon Abri," September, 1917*

*Monday morning*

HAVE been sitting here in my bunk for the last two hours reading the letters and diary of Alan Seeger. The French cannonade is exceptionally heavy for this early morning hour, and the earth gives a terrific shudder every half-minute as the neighboring batteries of "155's" send off their quota of death and destruction to the Boche. The *arrivés* are not very frequent, but from time to time we hear the weird shriek of a "150" as it comes whistling over our heads and its dull roar as it bursts around the *Carrefour de Santé*. . . .

*Déjeuner* came to interrupt my morning entry — and then one of the *brancardiers* and I exchanged French and English lessons until it was time to depart with a load of *malades*. I am finding enough well-educated men among the *brancardiers* so that I can continue my work in pronunciation.

*Abri at Camp Dervin — Jeudi*

I WANTED to write a little last night, but we are not allowed to have lights out of doors in spite of the seclusion of the *abri* on this sheltered side of the hill. Inside of the *abri* there is only room for eight men, four *brancardiers* and four *ambulanciers*, to stretch themselves on their bunks *si plein des puces*. Downing and I stayed here on this little earth terrace talking far into the night. I had a wild desire to sleep out, the night was so beautiful; however, on account of the danger from gas attacks I compromised by spreading my blanket-roll here and gazing up through the trees while we talked. I was reminded of some of my idyllic nights in the pine grove on the banks

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

of the Piscataqua. But periodic disillusionment came as the "155's" at the base of the hill sent an occasional shell over our heads, screaming into the night.

After dinner I set off to gain the *observatoire* and see some of the enemy country. After following a bewildering, winding line of trenches and wire entanglements along the crest of the hill, I finally arrived and was cordially shown around by the *poilus* there. Through a pair of periscope glasses which were carefully concealed by the camouflage, I could see the immense clouds of dust raised as our shells arrived from time to time. Through another glass I saw the ruined village of Montfaucon, and the tree observatory which was being shelled. A large road which ran along in full view was completely torn up by shell-holes. A careful scrutiny of the map which was suspended at one side gave me a more intimate acquaintance with the exact locations of the trenches on 304.

### *Grange-le-Comte — Sunday evening*

WE are to go back *en repos* Wednesday. The last two nights have been very chilly. Every man in the cantonment suffered more or less from the cold. Yesterday evening the new regiments which are to relieve the Division were filing up the road into the yard. What a slaughter there would have been had a few Boche planes sauntered by.

We were routed out this evening by the sound of falling bombs, but the airplanes have passed over now, and seem to have gone farther inland or toward the hospitals and railway stations. All the fellows here fled to the trenches and *abris*. I stayed out by the trench long enough to watch the explosions of anti-aircraft shells and the flare caused by the bombs as they struck. This is a weird, damned business of war.

JAMES H. LEWIS <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Eastport, Maine; Harvard, '18; joined Section Sixteen in April, 1917; later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. These are extracts from an unpublished diary.



## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

FROM November 4 until December 19, Section Sixteen (U.S. 634) continued work in the Verdun sector, being cantoned at Houdainville, and having *postes* at Citerne Marceau, La Source, and Poste d'Alsace (Carrière Sud). It was here that the car driven by Kendall was hit by shrapnel, and Kendall injured, but not seriously. Following this came *repos* at Triaucourt. From the 19th until the 24th of January, the Section was attached to the 3d Division and worked Hill 304 in the Mort Homme sector. Its cantonment was Jubécourt, and the *postes* were Esnes and Montzéville.

On January 25 began a *repos* at Ligny-en-Barrois. On February 18, however, the Section returned to the front with its old Division, serving in the Bois d'Avocourt sector until April 2. The cantonment was Rarécourt; the *postes* were P4 and P2, Formont and Avocourt. During the height of the Somme defensive the 3d Division took part in holding a sector near La Faloise from April 28 until August 11. It was in this town that the Section was cantoned. It was later shelled out of the town, and camped in the woods. Bombing was frequent. The Section served *postes* at Ainval and Thory, and was cited for its work here. The 3d Division took part in the opening of the allied offensive, when the British and French attacked in liaison. The Section's cantonment was at La Faloise, and the *postes* Thory, Brache, Aubvillers, and Sauvillers.

The Section then moved to the Saint-Mihiel region, being held as a reserve for the American forces at Vanault-les-Dames. It then proceeded to take part in the Champagne-Argonne offensive, being attached to the 53d French Division. It was in this sector from October 15 to October 31. The 53d Division was made up of two French regiments and two regiments of Czecho-Slovaks, former Austrian soldiers, and volunteers now for the French cause. They were fine fighters and suffered very heavy losses. The Section's cantonment during this time was in a field near Bourcq, and the *postes* were Vrizy, Grivy, and Condé-lès-Vouziers. During the latter part of this offensive in the Champagne, the Section cantonment was at Jonchery-sur-Vesle, with *postes* at Pévy and Hermonville.

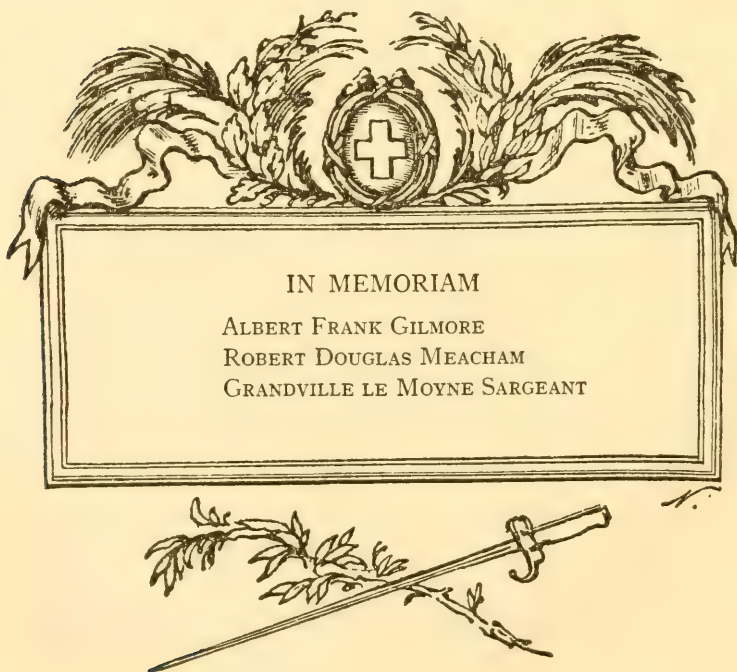
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

The Section, after the close of the Champagne-Argonne-Meuse offensive on November 1, entrained for the Vosges, where its Division was due to take part in the coming Franco-American Metz-Lorraine drive. The Section convoyed to VitteL, the famous peace-time watering-place. It was here when the Armistice was signed. It soon took part in the advance of the French Army of Occupation, going into Lorraine by way of Metz and Thionville. During its stay in Germany it was cantoned at Saarbrücken, Saint-Ingbert, Kaiserslautern, and Kirchheimbolander. It was at this town that it was relieved on March 7, 1919, by S.S.U. 619, and, leaving its cars there, proceeded to the U.S.A.A.S. Base Camp, *en route* for *l'Amérique*.

MARSHAL G. PENFIELD <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Fulton, New York; Cornell, '19; served in Section Seventy for two months, and, on enlisting in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service, with Section Sixteen.



## *Section Seventeen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

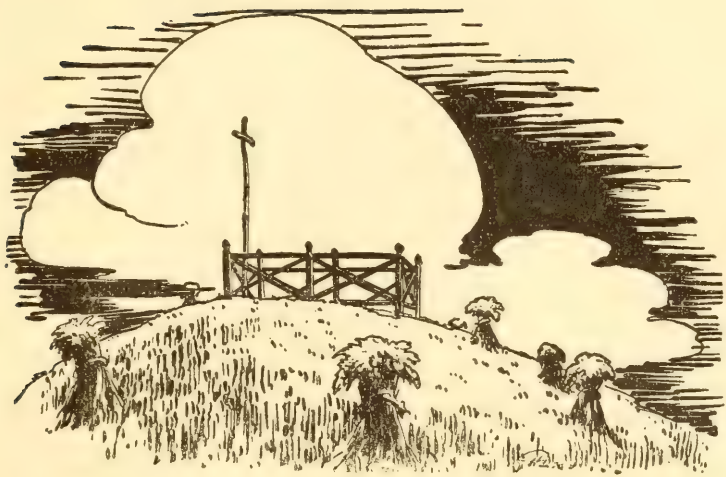
I & II. JAMES W. D. SEYMOUR

III. BASIL K. NEFTEL

IV. CARLETON FAY WRIGHT

## SUMMARY

SECTION SEVENTEEN left Paris for the front on April 30, 1917. On May 10 it found itself at Vadelaincourt in the Verdun sector, and on the 3d of June left for Jubécourt, passing the months of June and July on the Meuse front. A short *repos* was spent at Condé-en-Barrois in the early part of August. On the 14th of the month the Section arrived at Ville-sur-Cousances, near the Meuse, where it remained until September. It then went to Mesnil-sur-Oger, near Épernay, in the Champagne district, making a brief stay, thereafter going to Mourmelon-le-Grand and the Champagne front, in the region of the Mounts, where it continued as Section Six-Thirty-Five.



## *Section Seventeen*

Their manners, their ways of expressing themselves,  
Their courage, which nothing can quench —  
The humanest lot that were ever begot —  
Thank God, we have been with the French!

LANSING WARREN

### I

#### EN CONVOI

APRIL of 1917 saw the formation, at rue Raynouard, of Section Seventeen, and its departure for the field. As *Chef* came an old Section Eight man, Neftel, forever to be known as "Nefty." From all the ends of the States were gathered the members of the new group, from Nevada to Virginia, from Texas to New England. Their most common bond withal was that they sailed from home, the most of them, on St. Patrick's Day and that they were "all in it" before we declared war. The twenty ambulances were a memorial to Dr. Charles Goddard Weld, of Boston.

In those days a banquet sped each new section to its work; and there in the dining-hall at the "farewell-to-Paris" feast were assembled all those who came to know



one another so completely and well in the months to follow. There the "Sarge" (or French Sergeant), who fed us and cared for us so long and faithfully, became a fundamental part of the Section. There Mr. Andrew welcomed Seventeen to the rolls of the old Service. There began the history of our "Seventeen Family."

*Convois!* At the very word come trooping memories of hosts of roads, and incidents unnumbered stir again to life — the trail of the scuttling blue-gray column that led always ahead, onward, around a turning into the unknown. It was afternoon when the Section finally got under way on its first jaunt through the crowded streets of Paris. Trouble of a light-hearted sort began with the first interruptions of the city's traffic. Cars took wrong turnings, streams of vehicles cut in between, drivers got turned all about, and when the gates were reached there remained but a handful of the original score. Lost in Paris! And night was hurrying down. There followed wild hours of weird search, when *Chef* and French Lieutenant and "Sarge" drove furiously about seeking the strayed ones. Policemen, questioned, admitted they had seen ambulances pass.

"Going which way?"

"*Là, là, là!*" — in all directions, with a comprehensive French flourish of hand and whisker.

Finally, singly and in pairs, the cars were rounded up, but not until late dusk. So the encampment was made just outside the walls, and Seventeen spent its first night in the open under the stars, in the public park at Pantin.

The first real day of convoy followed — perfect in weather and in a smooth-running trip to Vertus, where, dusty, and in the darkening twilight, we saw, under the magic of "Sarge's" voice and hand and eye, spring up a dining-place, and a meal of wonderment take form: tired men and dirty ate of luscious "steak and French fried," in the cool of the night with gleaming yellow lamplight, and the already home-like Fords near by.

From Vertus the Section ambled to Bar-le-Duc

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

through the sumptuously verdant countryside of France, and thence by easy stages came to the trees and green shade of Guerpont, where tents were raised, shadow-flecked under the trees, and meals were served in the glass summer-house of the château. It was then that our history became one with that of the 97th Division of Infantry. There we first came to know our rakish 59th Alpine Chasseurs, and the friendly 303d, whose regimental march is an unending memory. There, too, General Lajaille first inspected his new ambulance section and puffed us up with kindly words of interest and faith; and for a week the Section remained reposefully in the gloaming of the woods by the stream.

### VADELAINCOURT — EVACUATIONS

THEREAFTER came the move to Vadelaincourt, close by the aviation field, where bombings became of almost nightly occurrence, and where the Section grew accustomed to spending "the top of the evening" on its back in ditches watching the sparkle of the shrapnel and the signals spume into the sky. It became a mere nothing to tell a pilot's age and hair color by the rhythm of his motor! As yet there had been nothing of *postes* and shell-torn highways — evacuation work had been the Section's only duty. The days trailed goldenly by. Soccer against a very fine aviators' team spurred our members almost to practice; but when two weeks' quarantine within the hedged limits of camp descended on us, because of a Frenchman's illness, the monotony weighed heavily on every one.

### ON THE MEUSE — JUBÉCOURT

FROM Vadelaincourt the Section went to Jubécourt, the village of the mill-*épicerie*, where dwelt the two friendly maidens, Abijah and Georgette, who cooked us tarts and taught us French.

For two long months Seventeen was quartered there on the Meuse, just outside our straggling little improv-

erished village of dull-red tiles and musty-plastered walls. On a steep green hillside, reached by a home-made, precariously dipping driveway, squatted the two tents that were our abode through June and July — a hillside all aglitter with poppies and blue flowers, and a French version of "Queen Anne's lace." Before us the ground sloped away to a springy meadow-flat, through the marshy centre of which chuckled the sleepy Cousances River, the little stream that meandered its absurd, small, winding way from sad Ville-sur-Cousances, where Harmon Craig<sup>1</sup> lies so alone, to give up all its energy, after cascading over the old milldam, in the shallow by the road, and finally to disappear and lose itself under the Jubécourt bridge.

In its course it served many ends. By a bend the water flowed swift and deep among the reeds to form a swimming-hole; luscious its cooling after the welter of the roads, sweet its mystery under a golden moon after a day when earth itself seemed to pant a little at the warmth. Broadening a mite, the stream gave place for watering of tired army horses, a grateful interrupting of the dragging haul of ammunition and supplies. Then came the reach that never lacked for kneeling soldiers, scrubbing and rinsing their weird clothing — immensely long-tailed shirts; stomach-winding cloths of vivid hue; long, baggy, gay-colored *caleçons*, string-tied at the bottom. Or here they bathed their heads and hands, raising tanned, cheery faces to sputter us a greeting through the suds. Stumpy trees, knee-deep in the water, acted as dressing-tables with bits of mirror stuck there to aid the luxuries of the toilet. The current seemed to pause here in friendliness before it gushed over the dam and opened into a washing-place for horses, carts, and ambulances.

Above the tents the officers' "château," a hut with leaky tin roof, topped the rise, and below under a blossoming bank were the *atelier* shed and the shack which

<sup>1</sup> Harmon B. Craig, of Section Two, killed by a shell July 15, 1917.

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

served triply as kitchen, banquet-hall, and French staff barracks.

Sharply up out of Jubécourt circled the street, to become our road toward the front as it curved, and rose, and fell to Brocourt, over the upland fields that seemed forever golden. Past the *triage* hospital, down through the hillside town it wound into a valley, then up abruptly again onto the top of the world. Rapidly it went now past clumps of woods, over the open country, until it paused on the steep, looking down on wrecked and torn Récicourt. Slowly the road spiralled down into what remained of the village, turned several tumbled corners, crossed a muddy stream on an age-old stone bridge, and came to a riven barn that hid our cars by day from prying *avion* eyes. A breathing space there, in the bleak little room that served as our abode; up some stone steps, low raftered, and blackened with smoke. There was the cupboard door graven with the names of those who had used the room, there the chimney under which we brewed so many *marmites* of chocolate in the cold, gray dawns. An opening, once a window, led to a space, littered with breakage from houses roundabouts, where sank our dank, dark *abri* (which we never used). And all about grew riotous wild pink roses and bloody poppies.

### THE POSTES

ON went the road then, up, after a passing bow to the wide Verdun-Metz highway, gleaming white away to the horizon, along the back of a hill with a big-gun emplacement building under a screen of *camouflage* below, until of a sudden the way dodged down into the black woods where cliff-dweller *poilu* camps abounded, and woods clung to its sides, until the *postes* were reached. A sector of woods and gloom it was, where shells lit unseen and snarling among the tree-trunks, or where one heard the spatter of *éclats* among distant leaves and could not tell comfortingly the exact whereabouts of the incomers. "The Apple Tree Road," across a clearing, bent about

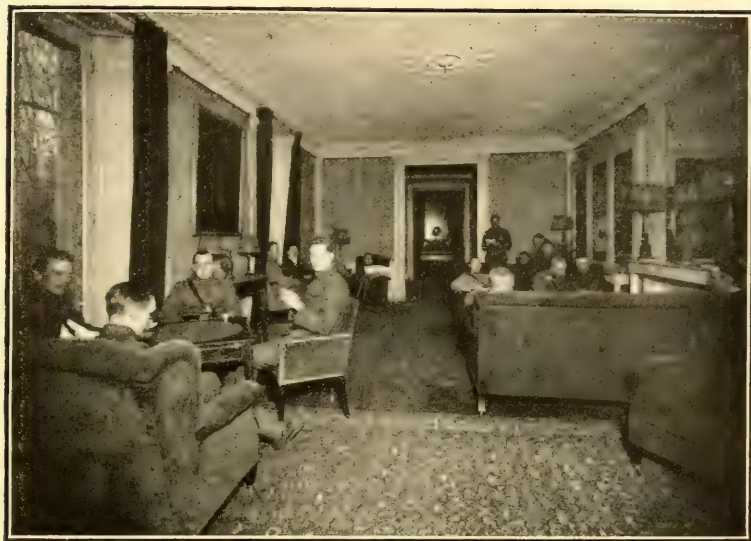


Ferrier's Farm, a mere jumble of stone and masonry. That road was an unloved spot. Caissons hurried their uttermost to reach the wooded lumpy rise beyond it, and up that rise the Fords must needs crawl toilsomely, and never did automobile travel more slowly. Artillery dug-outs edged the hill, tantalizingly suggesting refuge that we could not seek. In the valley one found damp mists at night that swirled like a wavering, pale sea; and gas also at times. *Poste 3* lay beyond at a wicked corner, a cruel road of ruts, that harbored much gas and was a favorite lighting-place for shells. Now we were among the close-strung batteries — spitting "75's" and grunting "120's." At night, shafts of flame seemed to crackle and sear one's ears, like harsh, darting tongues. Then came *Poste 2*, the relay *poste*, a place of calm and tall trees in early June; but from the moment of the first attack on to the end, a cluttered existence of explosions, clattering *éclats*, and gruesomeness.

### IMPRESSIONS

GREAT trees reared high above the *abris* which clustered familiarly about the central abode of the *Médecin Aide-Major*. A deep hole was the kitchen, fragrant with wood smoke and cookery smells, and blackened and scorched within. Luscious in weary times the tea that came from the dark mouth of it, even without the famed *eau de vie*, and the weird brews of its ex-sailor inhabitant, the cook dubbed "Fritz" by his ever good-natured *brancardier* comrades. Near by was the tin-roofed little shack walled with pine boughs which served as dining-room, with its greasy worn board and grimy benches. There were many friendships formed between us and our *brancardiers* about that table through the long, soft sunsets. Priests many of them were, and the bravest, most selfless little men in the world. None of war's glory theirs, none of its zest, but all the danger of it, all of its most awful sights, all the vague horrors of its hell. Each evening a little quiet group would start out, trundling their *bran-*





Living-Room at "21"



The Courtyard Gate of 21 Rue Raynouard  
HOME IN FRANCE



## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

*card* carriers or bearing folded *brancards* on their tired, stooped shoulders, down the gloomy road toward the star-shells — these humble, little, gray-grizzled, calm-faced old men, toward the vivid blossoming of the shell flowers and fallen, bloodied fruit. Gentle their hands as a mother's, tender and soft their voices murmuring prayers to comfort dying men; everlastingly faithful and kindly, healing the deepest wounds of the soul. Rich is their service, for at last their faith brings great good comfort and content to these, God's hero-children, the soldiers of France.

Almost hidden in the thick underbrush near by was the little cemetery, roughly fenced and reverently, though of necessity rudely, tended. Sunlit mornings, with birds trilling among the boughs, and patches of clear sky quivering through the foliage, one could glimpse the flash, so gay and brave and piteous, of the tricolor discs on the simple crosses, and a *casque*, perhaps, lying on a bare mound, or a torn, pitiful, graying *képi*. Sweet wild raspberries grew in dew-decked profusion close up to its very gate, while not a hundred metres away a battery squatted, hidden safely, and shivered the song of life with its shrieking. For a long time, until the tops of our high trees were combed away, shells from the battery would burst against the branches above the *poste* and wound. It was one of the inevitable things of woodland warfare.

Our sleeping-place was that of the *brancardiers* and *blessés*, and the assembly room of the rat tribe — an *abri* of some dozen double-decker, wire-bottomed bunks filled with straw, and other things. A lantern hung gleaming from the corrugated roof, except when its flame was jolted out by *arrivées*. There one would lie at night, wondering; with a gassed man gasping and choking below, the lamp turned down to a meagre pin-point, the tired snore of *brancardiers* in one's ears, rats scuttling about and over one, and the crash and crunch of guns and shells outside under the stars. There would come a telephone tinkle and one stumbled out into the coolness

to crank up and take a call. Jolting hurriedly off to one of the advanced *postes*, trying to memorize the position of new, bumping shell-holes to be dodged in returning, trying to make quick time; and swinging down into the bare fields toward Copinard, perhaps, one could see, when *fusées éclairantes* sprang up, the surge and eddy of smoke clouds about the trenches, while the staccato of *mitrailleuses* sounded all around, the drone of shells far overhead, and the grumble-mumble of *torpilles* and grenades. Just a hole dug into the hither side of a hummock and a rough roof support with an open space before it was Copinard, our *poste*; and in one's heart one cursed the uneven road back, as one tried to slide gently into the car the moaning, swathed bundle on its stretcher. The *fiche* was tucked into a pocket, the tail-board closed as softly as possible, then off once more, this time with all the care in the world — for every jounce escaped, every shell-pit clearly skirted, meant an inner pæan of joy; every jolt and shock hurt like a flame on a bare, tortured nerve, for thought of the *blessé* within. And when you had him finally at the *triage*, his attempt at a smile and thanks, if he were conscious, or if not, the set, gray pain of the unmoving face, made one feel little and humble, and grateful to be serving.

It seemed with one's load an unending trip back through the black woods. Eyes played queer tricks; each shadow clump became a *camion*, each darker bit of road a caisson; and roads lost all resemblance to their true selves, became weird ghosts of their daylight realities. Men and horses popped up noiselessly out of nowhere at one's very mud-guards — or else one thought they did, jammed on brakes, and found a clear road running on ahead. Queer sounds and smells rose up all about out of the dark, and an odor that was a mixture of dead things and things growing, of damp earth and powder bite, of vague gas — a smell in fact that means nothing in all the world except night on the crowded roads close to the lines, with the stir of unseen life and death around one.

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

### TRANQUILLITY AND PREPARATION

So the Section was taken from its month-long *repos* in the field and plunked down in this heavily-wooded, many-roaded sector close to the Argonne. The sector's centre was Récicourt, with radiating *postes* at Avocourt, in the Forest of Hesse, and Copinard beyond. Wild were the night-adventures of those first few weeks in the maze of black woodland ways and the befuddling up and down country, when cars spent long nights wandering on forbidden roads in zealous efforts to find themselves. Far did the Section range through error before the knack of picking the right turns became a second nature. But gradually the newness wore away in the quiet of the tranquil region. Driving around shell-holes and finding the smoothest paths blindly, by instinct, became a mere routine, and only then, it seemed, did there begin to be real activity.

Activity of a warring kind began really the third week of June; the time before was preparation. Up to then there had been cannonading of sorts, and a growing tenseness and excitement behind the lines. Wires were strung thickly along the branches beside the roads, with their bits of colored cloth attached to distinguish one from another. New wagon tracks were levelled overnight to make short cuts for ammunition trains. Troops began to arrive in ever-increasing numbers. Piles of shells grew up in unexpected places along the wayside and disappeared again in a twinkling into the mystery of the dark woods. There were guns moving up every night, like noisy shadows along the starlit roads and unseen clankings and rattlings with heavy-breathing horses in the blackness. Into Jubécourt came troops upon troops; *camions* were forever swirling up, laden, or hustling back empty, while dust rose stifling in the hot weather, and mud slopped dismally in the wet. Nothing was quiet. There was always a stir, a bustle, a constant flexing of the sinews of war which lent a tremor of expectancy. Rumors sped up and down,



and queerly enough the spirits of Seventeen took a sudden leap, rose higher with every wilder utterance. All the days of waiting, all the old rumors that had faded into nothing, were forgotten, for there was work looming big at hand, and the Section was glad.

### WONDERFUL AND TERRIBLE DAYS

JUNE 28 was a blue-and-gold day. The sky seemed to have receded a myriad miles away to become a sapphire brilliancy of space. Boche planes came over. All across the shining sky would arch the puffs of soft white as the anti-aircraft guns reached for the skimming, sun-touched shape. In the afternoon a plane came to circle directly over the village, back and forth, round and round. A regiment was trudging up the steep hill out of Jubécourt in the sweltering sun. Then a Frenchman slanted up to do battle, and the spatter of the machine guns came down to us. Seventeen, "rooting" as at a football game, was spread over the hillside craning its several necks. Suddenly came a spume of earth by the church, a grunting shock and a whistle. For a moment it did n't dawn on the mind that it was not the whistle of a bomb. A moment later, back of our camp, came another upheaval on the open hillside. Then we realized what was happening — Jubécourt, our home village, was being shelled; and with terrifying precision they achieved the range. The next shell struck the road, in the centre of the column of little blue men, and it seemed an age before the stream of troops left the road and took semi-shelter in the ditches. Again shells came to our fields, at three-minute intervals; now one could catch the thump of the gun, then see the spout of earth and smoke, with accompanying whistle and crash. They reached the town then regularly. Tiles clattered down in tinkling cascades, walls tumbled hollowly, *débris* shot into the air, sickening cries came, and smoke of burning buildings hovered over the red roofs. It was time for the relief to leave for the *poste*. So Hiis and Nutt drove out through the town and crawled up the

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

road out of it, with the expectation of more shells in their path. It was then, too, that Coulter, who had been washing his car by the mill, dressed only in his bathing-suit and *casque*, splashed into town with his ambulance, and picked up the wounded from the streets. And somehow, against all French regulations, other cars of ours found themselves working there, unordered, among the tumbling walls and swirling haze. The meadow now was receiving its share of shells. Richards received a plentiful shower bath of mud and pebbles, when he crossed into the village afoot to get the cars out of the street. For hours shells came in. Then they ceased, and rain began to come down, sadly retarding the work of the souvenir-hunting members of the Section who were already grubbing for shell-noses. Things seemed about to happen. But it rained softly all night; only the rumble of the guns grew stronger and more angry every minute.

The 29th dawned clear, and the guns thrashed unceasingly all day. The roads and woods were being sprayed with metal. Every car was called out, and with dusk came the first "big-show" night of the Section. Gas was thick on the roads in the woods. The shivering glare of the "75's" was like a yellow sheet lightning among the trees. Shells were exploding continually with their shattering concussion. Roads that had once been friendly became black pits of hate, seared with the wicked sparks of bursting *obus*. Louder and louder came the surf-like roar and beat rolling up to us from the trenches, where attack and counter-attack swirled in the misty night lit by gun-flash and shell-glare.

The whole Section served that night, and on through the day following. It was a weird time — the dark, stinking with gas, streams of wounded, panting engines, moans, and the eternal flicker of the echoing cannon. A Boche attack had made slight gain around "304," and a fierce counter-attack by the French had ended the affair. Two of the Section's extra hands served that night with the

*brancardiers* — Lewis<sup>1</sup> and Heywood. They went out into the sweating, reeling darkness and helped with their souls where help was needed sorely. Finally came dawn, and a comparative quiet near the trenches, though the guns and explosions roundabout us went on. And our labors were just commencing, for it is the day which follows such a night that brings the ambulance its more and more sickening load.

So it ran on into July — ever preparing for bigger things, and shelling in the woods, which the Boches were combing to seek out French batteries and to cripple the supply lines. But the batteries increased in number daily, and shell-holes in the roads were smoothed over within the hour.

THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT — THE GLORIOUS FOURTH  
IN Jubécourt we were joined by Lieutenant d'Halloy; and knowing him came to mean the world to us of his "Seventeen family." Duty and utter devotion to ideals were his faith. Of the kindest and cleanest of hearts, unselfish to the ultimate degree, he gave himself entirely to the Section, and by so giving he made us, every one, completely his. He had but to speak and we had followed him to earth's end. Long after star-shells have faded from our memories and we have forgotten the cannon language, we shall remember, and the thought will be a cleansing, bright flame — that man of as clear and clean a spirit as ever glowed in France's dark war night.

On July 4 came a mighty banquet with speeches of note by every one, including the French mechanic, and hoary recitations that were well-nigh ritual with the Section. Later, Section Sixteen, at Rarécourt, was our host for a concert and "light refreshment" fête. That was our American Day, and fittingly our next celebration was for France. On the eve of Bastille Day we took part

<sup>1</sup> Stephenson Paul Lewis, of East Cleveland, Ohio; Wisconsin, '17; served in Section Seventeen until September, 1917; later a Second Lieutenant in U.S. Artillery. Killed in action, October 31, 1918.

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

in the high jinks of the 87th Regiment, a parade through the village on the heels of their echoing band, and a riotous dance in the little square. We bore on shoulders our little *aspirant* chum, René Hurée, who was killed in the following attack. Next morning the regiment band, having greeted their Colonel, marched to our tent door and serenaded us most convincingly and flatteringly, even considering what they did to "The Star-Spangled Banner." Pleased as kids on Christmas, were the musicians when decorated with little crêpe paper American flags from our stock. In fact, most of the regiment sought them as souvenirs, and, as long as the supply lasted, were supplied. That afternoon saw a gala soccer game with the regimental team. Lieutenant d'Halloy was our goal-tender, every one played ferociously, yet we were friends, and the band blared gayly between halves. At the end, hurried a little as the regiment had to prepare for their departure to the lines, champagne was drunk in honor of the day, the regiment, the game, and the attack to come. Then into the dusk the friendly regiment marched off to their *camions*, with laughter and song on their lips, off to the trenches! — bearing in their helmets or gun muzzles our little flags. And more, they carried them gallantly in the attack that captured Hill 304 on July 17. It was toward that attack that the months of anticipation led, and more and more the excitement grew as the day neared.

### THE THRILL OF THE ATTACK — CONDÉ-EN-BARROIS

THEN the attack crashed forth in the misty morn, and our troops went forward. There seemed an electric thrill through the woods. Boche prisoners were massed in wondering-eyed, stolid groups, and one felt the glad note of success in the voices of the *poilus* on the road. Even the *blessés* seemed to be chuckling with the zest of victory.

It was about that time that Porritt's ambulance rolled over one night in the ditch, and his *assis* load were forced to right his car for him, after which his *blessés* climbed



back inside and were carried to the hospital. Also one night Bigelow<sup>1</sup> stopped on the Avocourt Hill to tighten up his low speed, regardless of the crashing shells and imprecations of his worried wounded, with the soaring star-shells glaring angrily down on his unconcern. And in those woodland wilds "Nefty" and the "Lieut" were gassed, yet stayed on to work beside us. Then our comrade and neighbor, Harmon Craig was snatched out of the summer world all in a cruel moment that he met so wondrously well.

On July 24, the Ninety-Seventh "went out." We tore down our tents, packed up our homes, and fled over sunlit roads to Condé-en-Barrois where we enjoyed three rich weeks of reserve. It was an Indian summer time of ripening fields and orchards, of warmth and intermittent sun and shower. We came to know Bar-le-Duc then, astraddle the Ornain in its soft, green-velvet valley, and news reached our long white wooden barracks of the first citations, given us at Chardogne. "Nefty" received his first with us, and McMurray and Overstreet theirs. Then the *Médecin Principal* and our good friend, Monsieur Lacoste, the *Médecin Chef*, came back with us to a right royal celebrative meal.

Four new men joined us there, and Coulter left to enter upon work with the Paris staff. Thus came the first germs of the breaking-up. Merry were the days, and fattening the meals. At Génicourt near by, our 59th Chasseurs trimmed us in a riotous soccer game wherein our old friend Sergeant-Major Maurice, athlete and violinist, received a bump on the knee in colliding with "Rouge" Foster, that laid him up for two months, and made soccer with the Americans *défendu* for the battalion. There came restless rumors to us at Condé to the effect that never before had our General had such artillery massed

<sup>1</sup> Donald Asa Bigelow, of Colchester, Connecticut; served in the Field Service with Section Seventeen from its formation; joined the U.S. Aviation; subsequently a First Lieutenant; killed in an aeroplane accident, June 3, 1918.



## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

as was in our old sector, that a crisis was nearing, and that we were going back to serve again near Avocourt. Suddenly came something definite in a call for six cars to help Section Twenty-Nine. So we drew lots, and the lucky ones jeered at those who had to idle in our barracks. They slaved for days and nights, as did a second six who relieved them. Then came the order to move up, destination and kind of work unknown. But it was good to be under way, to be on the road once more.

### ON THE EDGE OF THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

WE left toward dusk on August 14. Back we sallied to homelike Ville-sur-Cousances, and up on to a hill-crest beside the Rampont road. The sky "dreened" rain while the Section made camp that night. Rain! And soggy tents to put up before a chance to sleep, and cars to go on duty at six next morning, not to mention the tired men who had arrived from lending Section Thirty-One a hand in our olden woods for a wild day or two. We prayed for warmth and clear weather, but, later, when the sun came hot and dust choked our very souls, we longed for rain again; and plenty we had of both — of rain, dreary mud, and weary cold, and, in the next hour, of sun, stifling dust, and sweltering heat. Besides, the whole Section was jammed into the two tents — *bureau*, baggage, cuisine, dining-room, everything — a jumble of all known petty trials and tribulations. Also there was work, two weeks of continuous driving. The little Fords of the Section had to evacuate the entire Brocourt *triai*ge for two big-car sections which worked our sector and the neighboring one. Curses a-many were heaped on the luck that made things happen so, for the Second Battle of Verdun was on, and we who had lived for it through June and July saw only the edges of it in August. But labor there was in profusion for every one.

All cars worked all the time. One slept by snatches when one could, wherever one chanced to be, and ate spasmodically of what happened along, or went unfed;

and always mud upon mud, or dust thick on dust. Day after day, night after night, of loading *blessés* in one's car, of tearing along swirling, crowded roads, dodging between *camions* and around swaying caissons, sliding past trudging lines of Boche prisoners in sunset dust-clouds, on and ever on, for the hospitals were far away. Then to unload the poor groaning burden into the cool, spacious *salles de triage* at the various places — Fleury or Froidos, Ville or Rarécourt; and hurriedly to crank up and sag wearily, hastily back to take another trip and another load and yet another — to keep the current of evacuation flowing easily and rapidly.

None of the Section will forget the arching-roofed tent at Brocourt, through which the *blessés* streamed into our cars and hands — the great gloom, the crowded *assis* and twisting *couchés*, the smell of antiseptics and drying blood, the whimper of rain on the canvas or the whisper of wind fluttering in under the curtained doorways; nor that weird night when Vadelaincourt was bombed and the glare rode red across the star-bright sky, when Boche planes snored and hurried above us through the darkness with searchlights reaching vainly after them. That night Hiis led a convoy of ambulances who did not know the roads from the burning hospital — from Vadelaincourt to Fleury.

### TO THE CHAMPAGNE

FINALLY the attack was over, and on the 30th of the month the Section dug its effects out of the mud and dust and set happy wheels along the main highway toward Champagne, past Châlons, and into the land of vineyards. Near Avize some bright-roofed houses cluster on the hillside — Mesnil-sur-Oger, the mythical Oger which naked eye has yet to find. There the Section washed away the stains of the Meuse days, and there came the first rumblings of coming militarization, which at last did come. The service terms of most of the men were at an end; the ways of other services seemed to lead more

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

strenuous, more invitingly precarious along the course of war, and they beckoned the spirits of the old Section. Beyond lay a vague time of fighting, and Seventeen, that had come a-sailing to France for service before its country made the war her own, chafed at the pictured restraint of old work with new ways. Then came the last great "party" on the eve of departure of the first to leave.

A little, low café room, crowded with faded field Service coats, an oval, oil-clothed table bearing the wine of the countryside, and roundabout the faces that were turning away from the known and settled, and brightening eagerly as they looked ahead into the unguessed and untried, a group that world winds were so soon to scatter apart, to separate, to waft to strange places. And comradeship was deep and good and strong. Toasts were pledged to the old Service and to the freedom of it — its labors and friendships and sorrows, but most of all its joys; and each man had a tightening cord in his heart and a twitch in his throat that night for the Service he was leaving, and his friends that he must lose, and for the Section that had been home and more than home so long in a dear stranger land.

JAMES W. D. SEYMOUR <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '17; served with Section Seventeen from June, 1917; later was a First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## II

### POILUS AND AMBULANCIERS

*Forêt de Hesse, before Récicourt  
where wild raspberries are thick  
5 p.m., Tuesday, July 10*

I'M sitting on a bunk in the *abri* at *Poste 2*. Have been here since something after three. Just now have entered eight *poilus*, muddy and gray-toned. French batteries of "75's" very near at hand are shivering our ears and shaking the ground in a terrific bombardment. They are aiming low. Their shells slip over our heads and clip leaves and twigs from the trees about the *poste*.

We have been ordered to remain in the *abri* because numbers of the shells explode in striking the tree-tops. As a result, Rowley's car has a hole — tiny, it is true — but a veritable hole torn in one side, and Garner's car (I came up with him) has a hole on the top near the back, and the adjustable top over the driver's seat had one of its supports fractured and a hole ripped in the cloth. Moreover, one of the *brancardiers* was wounded in the chest by a piece of shrapnel and was taken in by McMurray, after the lieutenant here and the *Médecin Divisionnaire* had dressed his wound.

### ACCIDENTS

It was queer that first shell which broke over my head. Rowley had told of their breaking earlier in the afternoon before he left. We were waiting about. I had wandered off toward the road munching a bit of chocolate (bought at the *coopérative militaire* of Récicourt), and the "75's" were cracking uncomfortably. Suddenly came a louder crash, and perhaps six feet away a leafy twig fell to the ground. I picked it up and moved toward Mac and Garner to make some remark of a laughing sort. Then I saw a *brancardier* supporting one of his comrades toward the



## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

big *abri* from the direction of the eating-shack. It dawned on me slowly and unbelievably that the shrapnel — French shells — were breaking near enough over us to wound; that this *brancardier* had been hit. He was hunched forward, his hands gripped tight to his left chest, and his face was gray, drawn; there were surprise and terror in his eyes. He was not saying anything, but he breathed hard, and it was as if he hoped to hold life in by pressing his hands in on his lungs.

A *poilu* came running in to say that his three comrades were killed about one hundred fifty yards down the road. The *Médecin Lieutenant* is down here now, and the man whose comrades were killed, sits shaking on the steps of the *abri*.

But the talk goes on as before. The Lieutenant just asked me if it were my machine that was hit. I told him it was Garner's, and he said, laughing a little wryly, "*Des souvenirs.*"

The three *morts* are being brought into camp now. Garner says he saw the four marching down the road not twenty minutes ago. Now one sits very still on the stair, and the three others are stiller yet. I'm glad it was not a French shell. There is an unfairness in its coming from one's own guns. Our near "75's" are at it again after a few minutes of quiet.

It was strange, when our *brancardier* was wounded, the man with him shivered and shook like a leaf. Now the *brancardiers* are going out to get those dead, from the roadside, out from under the *Boche* shells. They are grimy, ragged, little, oldish men, sad-faced and tired.

### BLESSÉS AND MORTS

MCMURRAY tells me many dead were brought in yesterday. I think the "survivor" is asleep now, hunched up, rifle upright between his knees, his boots slimy with rich wet mud, while his head droops forward, heaving with his slow breathing. I wonder if he dreams of a shell that strikes, and comrades that fall — or is it of home?



It is getting dusk. Some *blessés* — six at least — have arrived. One says he is from Paris; goes *en permission* in four days. He is dirty and ragged and irresistible. He has on a buttonless shirt, wide open on a hairy chest, mud-smeared, torn trousers, and straggly, dragged puttees. As he readjusted his stomach-warming sash, he looked down at himself and his mud-scow boots with a grimace, then twinkled at me, "*Le dernier cri de la mode.*" Somehow it seemed superb — typical somehow of the French *poilu* and his unquenchable humor.

Through the night, the three *morts* lie wrapped in sheets and covered with green branches, beneath the trees near the *abri*. They were pretty terribly messed up. One only I could bring myself to look at, after glimpses of raw flesh on the others; and nothing much remained of him below the chest. His face was little and wizened, his hair quite white, and gray. The Lieutenant squatted by with pad and pencil while a *brancardier* straddled the stretcher and went through the pockets of it that lay there — a thimble, a pipe; some letters and a picture blood-stained a little. The face was still, but one gory hand was clenched in agony. The other white bundle was lumpier and shorter than a man should be, — they say he was shot to pieces.

### NIGHT TRAGEDIES AT THE POSTE

*An abri at dusk, July*

FOLLOWING the bearded *capitaine*, who refused, on principle, a *brancard*, and went down *assis*, although his leg was horribly mauled, a *blessé* picked up down the road, with wound undressed, was toted in on a stretcher. He thought he was going to die. He said he could not breathe, and he groaned. One *brancardier* ran for the Lieutenant, another held the lamp close, others, sweating, stood about, great gloomy shadows, while two others tore and cut away his clothing to have a look at the wounds in his chest. Right and left sides seemed riddled, though there was not a great deal of blood. Still his chest appeared

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

distorted internally, and he kept groaning that it was *fini*. He begged for something, and a *brancardier* was despatched to another *abri* for it. He was long in returning, and the wounded man moaned and thrashed his arms about.

I supposed they had sent for a quieting hypodermic; but finally the *brancardier* returned with a booklet and a little jar. Then I noted that the *brancardier*, kneeling by the *blessé*, had a tiny red heart, a bleeding heart, on his *casque* — a priest. He rubbed a little something from the jar on the man's forehead and muttered a few words read from the book; and the *blessé* responded. "Extreme unction" I guess it was, and "confession." After it, the *blessé* was very quiet and peaceful. Of a sudden it came over me all of a heap that there was something back of mere creeds if religion could bring such calm, where a moment before was pain, racking pain. That low little back hole, with the yellow, smelly lamp and the presence of dirty, odorous *poilus*, suddenly became big and awesome, and filled with a breath of something more than mere life, or death, or war, or human meddlings. It seized one's thoughts, perhaps the first solid something to grip onto that I have seen here in a war-trodden world.

### DAYS AND NIGHTS

*Within sight — except for the woods — of Montfaucon*

July 11

It is quarter past nine. Sun is trickling through clouds and trees, as I sit here in a *brancardier's poste* in the Bois de Hesse. Since early morning I have been reading "Mr. Britling." The trees are green and bright, there is a cool breeze riffing the leaves, and birds chortle and trill. The *Médecin's* red and blue bedroom slippers sit outside his *abri* and twinkle comfortably in the sun. There has been a cleaning in our *abri* — Lord knows it needed one — and a disinfectant has been sprinkled about; the odor is strong in reminiscence of sulpho-naphthol.

This road now, down toward Copinard, is a lather of

mud — gray, wet mud that slaps and spatters underfoot. It is inches deep, and fluid. Tracks don't remain visible in it for long. No ambulances are here now.

Last night was weird. French batteries spat all through until near dawn, and *Boche arrivées* were plentiful. One struck a soup-kitchen down the road; gas claimed some victims near here; and a supply of French grenades or shells was exploded by a German shell. I was just cuddling down in my blanket when the rumbles came, several successive louder ones, as if shells were plumped down in bunches, each bunch nearer. The last and loudest crumbling crash caused our lantern to flicker out, and in the blackness we heard the stuff land on top of our *abri*. I thought, as did Harry Overstreet, that the next burst would mean the finish. I felt I wanted to get out from under the corrugated shell of the *abri*. But no other crash came, and I sent my searchlight gleam playing about the cavern while one of the *blessés* relit the light.

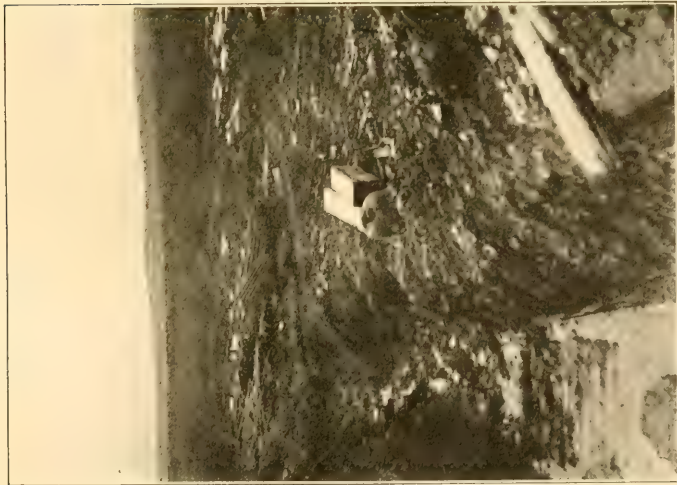
### AUJOURD'HUI ET DEMAIN

*Condé-en-Barrois, July 26*

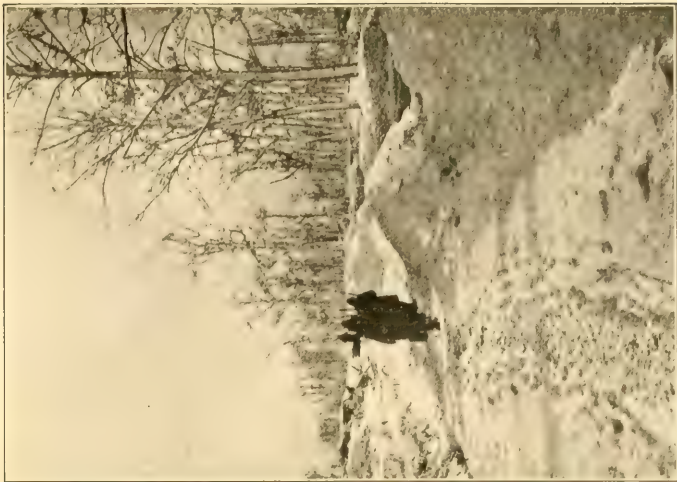
WE are *en réserve*, — a sort of semi-*repos*, after a month of hot work, and strain, too. It is not that we sweat and slave greatly, but there somehow seems to be a nervous effort and tightening in driving under fire which takes it out of one physically. The result is that after our "spells" of twenty-four or forty-eight hours we sink into lethargic repose until the next call. The days seem all alike, except that we are served *chocolat* instead of black sugarless coffee, on Sunday mornings, and they slip by, unsung, into the jumbled yesterdays of "a little while ago."

*Sunday afternoon*

It is now nearer still to the end of the month. This morning three of our Section and a number of the *brancardiers*, with whom we messed around at the front, about fourteen in all, were decorated with the *Croix de Guerre*. As a result, to-day has been a *fête* day, with feasting, songs,



“BOYAU” TO THE FORTS OF VERDUN ACROSS  
THE RECAPTURED GROUND



THE TRAIL TO THE TRENCHES IN WINTER





## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

wines, and speeches. Now we recuperate. There is talk of work again, and lots of it, in about ten days. There are American soldiers within twenty kilometres — a young lieutenant visited us yesterday and dined with us to-day. It seems hard to realize that all about us here are Americans, preparing to go down and face the thunder and flame that we have heard all around and over us.

*Monday morning*

LETTERS from over here ramble on very much as events seem to in France. There are so many days of war behind and apparently so many, many more ahead, that days count hardly at all. And if something is not done now, it can be done "to-morrow" or later. "A few days, one way or the other, don't matter" is a phrase I've heard repeatedly over here. Remembering your words, I've seen little enough, and done less; but it has been worth much more than anything I have "sacrificed" to come, to see — not France, for I've seen only tiny bits of it, but individuals from whom one can build up a vision of the French people. They go through Hell, and they smile as they go down into it and smile as they are carried back. No one — not a one I've met — protests at doing his share and more.

### UNDER THE STARLIGHT

*Jubécourt, July*

A DAY or so ago I saw one night more wonderful even than usual. It was clear starlight, and the guns were mumbling in their customary fashion, a sort of snoring of the sleeping dark. And, like slow lightning, the starshells glared bright, brighter, then faded. We received a call for two cars from our woodland *poste* to a *poste*, B 1, some two kilometres from the trenches. There we found no *blessés*, but they asked me — the other driver's French was more awful and even less serviceable than my poor attempts — if we would consider going down to the remains of a village — Avocourt — whose name has figured much lately in despatches, where the regimental *bran-*

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*cardier poste* is. It is just behind the trenches and there were thirteen wounded there — so many that there were entirely too few *brancardiers* to tote them up to our B I *poste*. You see, most of the regimental *brancardiers* being musicians, they had been called away back of the lines to give some general a band concert!

We had been told by our *Médecin Chef* that it was impossible and too dangerous to drive there. I was for being obedient (scared) and safe, but, thanks to Big's<sup>1</sup> enthusiasm, there seemed nothing to do but go. So we went down the two kilometres of shell-pocked road under the calm stars and wild shells. I'll never forget that jouncing rush through the dark, past troops and overturned caissons, scraping wagons, startling heaving horses. Then the slide over two big new shell-holes up an incline beside the *abri*, and beside a looming mound that backed the trenches. The star-shells were directly overhead. They made you feel coldly naked, and each minute-long glare lasted for ages. Then they splashed shells around about us; but we were busy enough with our *blessés* not to care much. Scared all the palest rainbow shades I was, but the "not-much-caring" was there, too. It is a fact; living with guns rumbling all the time, trying to sleep at our *poste* while French *soixante-quinze* batteries within a hundred yards of us crackle unceasingly, all of it in a fashion makes one tend to go on with whatever work be in hand, despite gun-fire aimed more or less directly at one.

It was, I imagine, about as near the real thing of the trenches as we shall get. There was a breathless, ducking hurry about thrusting the laden *brancards* into the little coughing Fords; all fingers were thumbs, and every stretcher had to be rearranged, while the *blessés*, that could, cried for speed. Thereafter came a strange ride with one's back to the possible onrushing shell. It had the sensation felt in years past when walking away from the unknown in darkness — one's legs then moved faster and faster, if one let them, until one was running in fear.

<sup>1</sup> Donald Asa Bigelow.

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

Just so it required effort not to open the throttle, let the *blessés* take their chances with bumps, and flee in panic. Then insanely we stalled both cars on a steep hill; the other chap's gears were loose. So we took "time out" and tightened them up, while our wounded tried to speed us on our way to safety, and dark, lumbering transports hurried past with clattering hoofs and creaking wheels. But it has slipped into the mere humdrum of a night's work done. That was really uneventful. Nothing happened to us, and there is not a man in the Section who has not gone through a heap sight more, many a night.

### NEWS THAT FILTERS IN

*The first repos, July's end*

WE know little of the war here. Scraps of hearsay filter in, and we have strange accounts of our sector's activity from the wounded before they pass out of our hands and ears. We become sloppy, too — terribly sloppy of language and manners.

France would seem strange to us if uncluttered with frame barracks, *camions*, and if unflooded with uniforms. France for us, too, is almost wholly male. I have exchanged words with a girl in an *épicerie*, a woman in a laundry, and an old, old lady with a crumpled cap and wondrous crinkled white curls, who worked in the fields — the only femininity I have come into converse with since leaving Paris. And male civilians are either bent crabbedly over a cane, or in pinafores, sucking thumbs, and knee-high. But I do like the French people I have met. Our cook is a priest from down near Spain who resembles Mephisto or a stage conjurer, and has a remarkable gift for making jokes and making uneatable food not merely edible, but delicious in strange guises.

### AN IDYLL OF OLD MEN

*In camp, Jubécourt, July 22*

WE expect to go *en repos* with our Division for two weeks at least. It means rest up and clean up. Some of our Divi-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

sion have been in the trenches for forty days. They are, you see, a holding, not an attacking, division. The *poilus* are wonderful. High, too, I hold the *brancardiers*, whose death-rate is probably the highest of any department of the service, and who bear on their arms the red cross, and on their faces friendly, quiet smiles. They are old men most of them, often with glorious individual characters, too; some were in the 1870 war; numbers are priests; some are professors. Their work is gathering in the wounded and the dead, too. They have a two-wheeled frame on which they can sling a *brancard*, and the creaking of these wheels is heard day and night.

I have seen blood on men's faces, gray faces swathed in stained gauze; I have helped wounded into ambulances, and shoved stretchers in; and when they are unavoidably jolted, the poor chaps try to stifle their groans and smile. I think they know we are trying to help. I feel now that I am of more service than I have ever been before over here, or in my life. A *brancardier* just told me that there are *beaucoup des morts*, and that it is a ferocious attack. In the meantime the *poilus* go on wandering grimly trenchwards down the road. I wonder if this is "merely an artillery duel on the Argonne front" that we used casually to read of in the New York papers?

### YOUTH ETERNAL

*Brocourt, August, during a lull in the so-called  
"Second Battle of Verdun"*

JUST now I have said good-bye to a twenty-two-year-old German, wounded and a prisoner. He comes from Hamburg and speaks both English and French. He has been three years in the war, and this is the first time he has been wounded — both the arm and leg now. He wears the Iron Cross ribbon and said he had received news that he was promoted to first-class just before the attack. He says he was wounded while in charge of a machine-gun squad, and found himself and companions flanked by the French. He could have killed a bunch of Frenchmen, but



## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

did n't, since he knew it would make no difference in the French victory. He says he was prompted by the thought of their wives and children, and gave the order not to fire just before a second ball struck him. His father is a rich merchant in Hamburg. This chap — just my age — said he had a horse back there — he wanted to go back. The war has lasted too long, he said. The people, he told me, were as tired of it as the French. But it is the Government that keeps it all up. He had enlisted in the Artillery, but found that he could not possibly become an officer, and so went into the Infantry. He said it is not what a man is, but what his forebears were, that made a German an officer. Unless a man had extraordinary class distinction he could not hope for much. The officers are told not to talk to the men, though they do it a little now in the trenches. I wonder how much of what he said was sincere!

### AT THE TRIAGE

*The Ambulance Triage at Brocourt, 2 a.m., August 27*

THIS is written as I wait on call. There are no *blessés* here, and *brancardiers* sleep about me on stretchers. I am in the hall of the *hôpital de triage*. It is a long, low barrack of the usual French military sort, dirt-floored and semi-white-walled, with leaky ceilings. There are rows of low wooden horses and benches, the former being stretcher supports; the latter, racks of pain for sprawling *assis*. Every one is asleep here. My lantern smokes. On the table are the pannikins and tins from which cold and hungry *blessés* are given coffee and food. In the *cuisine* great cans of coffee simmer on the stove always, and a basket of bread is ready for the hungry claw. And perhaps hot black coffee and dry bread are n't luxurious, eaten on a bleak dawn after a whole night of work!

### A GLIMPSE OF THE FRANCE OF PEACE

*Mourmelon-le-Grand, Champagne, December*

It would be much fun to have you along to tell how it all looked before it became as it is. For how can I feel I know



anything of France when all I've seen of it is spattered with war-built houses, split and serried with old trenches or practice ones, cut by new ammunition roads and tracks, and overrun with uniforms? French people? Why, all there are are old, old, old bent people, or children — or soldiers. It is when we go farther back, *en repos*, that we see, I imagine, something of before-the-war France. Back there the roads are shining, straight and white, and great proud trees stand stiff beside, where the green and gold and brown fields stretch away and away until they scramble up rounded hillsides, and either lose themselves in purple-green woodlands or break off against the diluted, sharp sky. Even there, sometimes, one passes ribbons of over-grown barbed wire of the first fear-days, that ramble across the landscape, broken where roads run through or fields are ploughed. That was as it seemed when we were *en repos*. Now everything is frizzled with cold; and things appear bleak — almost, for somehow they don't quite succeed in being that. For even on the dreariest, rainiest days, there seems to be everlasting zest and life and beauty to this France.

With the last month or so it is as if the artist, painting existence here, had changed his palette; there are as many different tones and shadings, but they are an entirely different set from those used in the summer. They are silvery now, or cold golden, sleek grays, or misty purples or browns. The other morning, for instance, when I crawled out into the early dawn to go on *ravitaillement* with our French *maréchal des logis* and a pair of French regiment lieutenants, it was all frigidly washed in thin colors. Everything was frozen. The fields had every individual blade of grass white-crustured with *gelée* and the sky looked almost as pale as the globular white moon that still was over us. Then the sky — that part where the morning sun was rising — seemed to have no color at all, only light thereabouts; and distant dark firs or houses stood out sharply one minute, then became hazy the next. Autoing was a duty, not a pleasure, that day. The

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

road ruts were frozen solid and crunched under the tires; carts, horses — everything was white with frost, and men stumped along the hard road muffled in their capes, and their breath puffed away from them like steam. The Frenchmen surely are wonderful to watch. They wear *sabots* at this time of year, and clump about a little awkwardly, but not so awkwardly as I do in mine. For just as I wore *poilu* shoes all summer, so I thunder about in wooden shoes nowadays. You can't imagine — but it may be you can — how warm they are and comfortable, too.

### A MAN AMONG MEN

I WISH you knew our French Lieutenant. He is only twenty-six or so, and one of the finest, cleanest men I ever hope to know.

His Christmas speech, which was delightful and heart-breaking, was as follows:

To my old comrades and to my fellow friends of Section Seventeen — to you all, my dear friends:

Christmas is with us once more. It is with the greatest emotion that this day I extend to you, from the bottom of my heart, my best wishes. The majority of you fellows are spending your first Christmas far from your dear ones at home, and it is now "Somewhere in France." I have the pleasure of offering you not only my good wishes, but my heartiest thanks — thanks for the great sacrifice that you made in leaving your home and coming to my dear country. You are making this sacrifice with a grandeur of soul that nothing could equal, in doing your duty and in helping us to do ours, and at the same time putting forth your courageous efforts to make peace harmonious, and good-will toward men a reality and not a mere Christmas term.

When first appointed *Chef* of the Section, I said to your comrades that it is one of the most unselfish and beautiful doings of history, these sacrifices you are making for the wounded, whom yesterday you called friends and to-day allies. When our heroes have made the supreme sacrifice, giving their life for the common cause of liberty and justice, shedding their blood on earth — nothing is more touching than to see how you, witnesses of their exploits, with courage and devotion, braving all dangers, come and reach out your fraternal arms,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

which you made very soft in order to lighten their pain. I thank you for the comfort you give to them through the glance of your eyes, which means, "Don't fear anything, the States are with you," and in the same way, wounded though they be, they seem to answer with their own thanks — "France is with the States." I thank you for myself who feel these two hearts throb as one — one that of the French wounded, and the other that of the American saving him.

We have this year a Christmas tree taken from a part of the "No Man's Land" of last year — a tree whose green branches give us great hope and whose lights are symbols of joy, taking us back to our families and sweethearts, who at this time are rejoicing in a similar tree, but many miles away. Alas! that there should be at the table a vacant chair. But be sure that on that chair will be a draped flag, and in the heart of your dear ones, as they gaze at it, will be a feeling of proudness and honor. I am sure, however, that with the same courage with which they try to hide their own regret at your absence, they will, in their mind's eye, take the long road which Santa Claus has had to travel in order to bring you the contents of his bag and the many heartiest Christmas greetings.

Fellows, let your thoughts wander back to those who are thinking of you at this time, and permit your Lieutenant to thank them from the bottom of his heart for all they have sacrificed; allow him also to extend the season's greetings to them and to you, with the hope that Santa Claus will bring you happiness, much happiness, and the happiness you deserve. Next year, however, I hope Santa Claus will find that the victories of the Allies have visited the earth before him and that he may as of old see the trees growing, grass covering the numerous shell-holes, the towns and villages rebuilt again, and by each cross on the many graves, may he perceive, along with Christmas wreaths, Victory saluting our heroes.

Now, fellows, to you all, my dear friends of the Section, I extend the wish for a very merry Christmas and the happiest New Year.

. . . . .  
When our Lieutenant quitted us, he left us a bit of himself in a letter — he had n't dared try to speak his feelings — just as he had written us hearty little speeches and read them to us on our *fête* days.

*Fellows:*

Sometimes it is easier to write than to speak. I have to go,

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

to leave you, my Seventeen Family. My last words are, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, from the soul of a real friend, of the brother I am for you; I thank you for all you have done for France, thank you for all the kindness of heart, the devotion you have shown for your Lieutenant. Fellows, thank you; I carry on my heart the name of Seventeen, and in my heart always, during the war, after the war, during all my life, the name, the souvenir of you, my friends. Do follow the traditions of Seventeen and do think during your life that I am always with you. I am going, but my heart, my mind, are staying. Au revoir, and do remember, Duty above all.

D'HALLOY

### THE FLAGS OF FRANCE

*Mourmelon, December 6*

THERE is a young, clean-faced priest — a Captain as most priests seem to be — who is often our guest, and attached to our Division. He wears a *Croix avec palme* and speaks slow, precise English. One day back in June he rode down from the front with me and explained in French that having been three days in the trenches during a little attack and having had no sleep, he was too tired to think English! But for his *bonnet de police*, his *croix*, and his *poilu* shoes — also his gas-mask slung about his shoulders — he might be a priest in a church instead of in the trenches. Another of our Division priests is a short, bearded, gray man, with a wide smile and terribly old, sad eyes. He speaks no English, but always offers us and every one cigarettes, though he never smokes himself.

Sunday afternoons in a little open space across the street a band plays — usually military airs. And always there is a wonderful flourish when the buglers raise or lower their instruments — something decorative in the simple action, just as a French salute has somehow a dignity, a grace, and a complimentary quality of greeting that no other salute can claim. It is an all-embracing affair, that salute; a welcome into brotherhood almost, even when given by a French general to a U.S.A.A.S. private. When I was in Paris one day I dove into a *Métro* train, in a crowd, and plunked against a lone two-star general.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

I saluted in a flustered manner, and he could not have returned it more graciously if I had been the King of England.

To come back to bands and our same street outside here. There was a review a month back in the forenoon, when the sun was out and red leaves were on the big trees or fluttering down from them as the ceremony on the plains beyond our town was finished. Then the regiment marched down our street with band playing and officers stiff on their horses. And there was a swing to the *poilus'* shoulders and a strength in their faces. Their French flag was a bit torn, but it was crusted with names in gold of their battles and a *Croix de Guerre* and a *Médaille Militaire* nestled in its folds near the staff. We saluted as it passed, and the sun caught it and the tri-color flamed, and all in that instant one understood why men tossed away their lives for France. It seemed the logical thing to do — the only thing. And I was glad that those colors belonged to us, too, and glad that even so humbly I'd been of the *Armée Française*.

Why should a banner, a mere bit of silk, choke one's throat so? Perhaps because no French flag is a "mere bit of silk" — it is a bit of free blue sky, of searing white pain, and of man's rich blood. It's a hymn and a pledge, a wreath, a sword, a cross, a soul; and a part of that French soul is in the heart of every *poilu*, and, please God, will seep into our American hearts who have come to France to fight, and fight standing on French ground.

JAMES W. D. SEYMOUR <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above are extracts from home letters, which were described as — "these blooming scraps. They are so absurd — their attitude as if the writer were seeing the immensities around him with a new and valuable point of view, with things of value to say of them; whereas in reality he was only very young and unknowing, and impressed and truly very new himself. I wish some abler person had seen the things that passed before me, to put them in living flame on paper with a genius pen. Surely he has been in the war somewhere, the genius who will paint it in all its unforgettable colors so that it will last forever for all the peoples of the world. But if you want these jumbled words, you are welcome to them, for it is true that a dull gray background helps real things to stand out."



### III

#### NOËL

*Christmas Day, 1917*

THIS is Noël and I am still in France. The biggest surprise of the evening, and one which made me very proud and happy, was when the Major read an order of the day, citing the Section and pinned the *Croix de Guerre* on our flag. He also decorated our French Lieutenant, and, much to my surprise, gave me another star for mine. I am so pleased that the work into which I have put all my strength of soul and body is appreciated.

*Grandeville, January, 1918*

WE are at last *en repos* and are quartered in a little village that hardly deserves the name. We asked an inhabitant how many people lived here, and he answered that he did not know whether it was 129 or 130. The Mayor has the only silk hat, and if any young blood wants to get married, he has to rent it, and then walk up and down the main street with his bride on his arm. We say that a sense of humor and a pair of rubber boots are all one needs in this town. This is our second rest in ten months, so you see we are badly in need of it.

*March, 1918*

IN summing up our record from the time we left Paris until now, we have received one Section *citation* and nine individual ones. Of course, I can't tell you the number of *blessés* we have carried, but will some day. We have had four cars smashed by shells, but they are still with us. To see them now lined up in a peaceful country village, so far away from the sound of shot and shell, every one showing the scars of battle, the bodies all sprinkled with *éclats* holes, makes one want to go up and pat them on their hoods and say, "Boys, you have earned a good rest;

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

we are going to clean you all up and paint you, give you plenty of new grease and oil, and you can feel in your carburetor-souls that the *Croix de Guerre* you earned, you certainly deserved. You need not feel ashamed to have them painted on your wind-shields." This may sound conceited, but it really is true, for the old cars have stood up wonderfully, and we are all proud of them, even in their present condition.

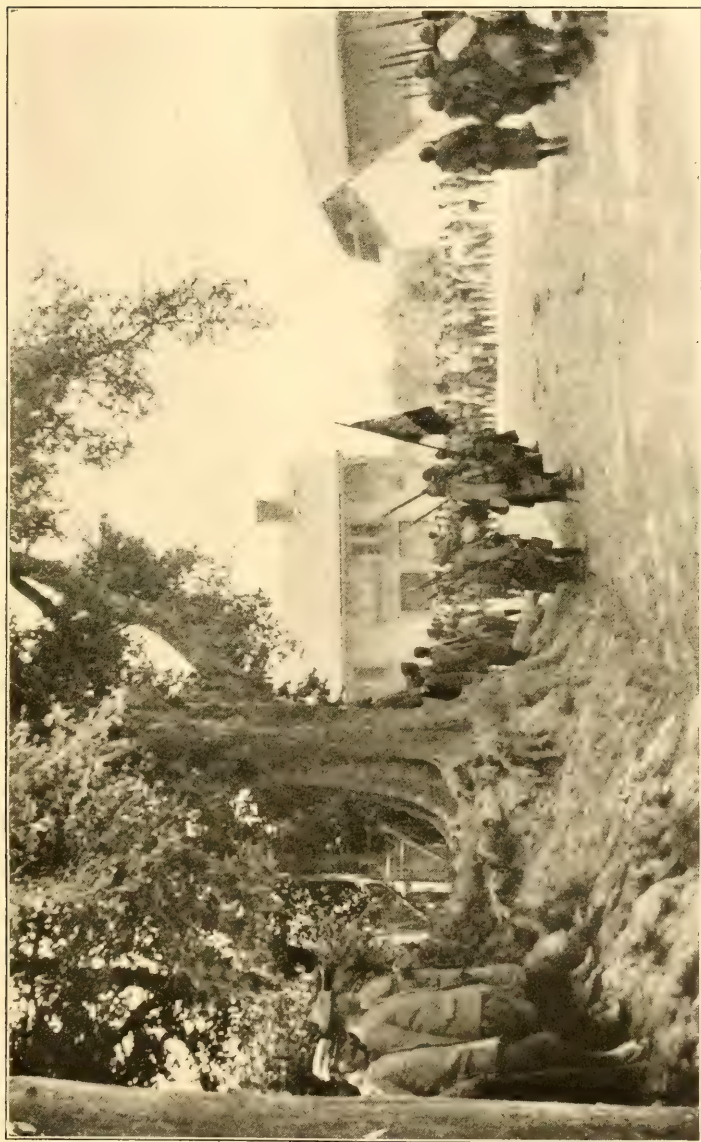
I have just returned from Nice, having spent my *permission* there. Going down, I had to stand up on a crowded train from Paris during twenty-two hours. But it was worth the fatigue — the sunshine, the palms and the orange trees, the peacefulness of it all were too wonderful! At the Casino at Monte Carlo, I looked in at the gambling through the glass doors, as no one in uniform is allowed to enter.

Now I am back, and I am feeling very badly to-day, as the army has taken away our French Lieutenant. He is such a wonder, and he loved the Section so. We all miss him terribly. I would rather have lost my right arm than see him go. I have a splendid lot of men, and I am very proud of them. We all pray that the war will soon be over. Sometimes we dream about it, but always wake up in muddy France. But when we are discouraged and homesick, as we all are sometimes, we have only to look at these wonderful French people to get a brace, and have renewed courage to "carry on" until the end.

BASIL K. NEFTTEL <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Larchmont, New York; joined Section Eight of the Field Service in August, 1916; *Chef* of Section Seventeen from its beginning, and its Lieutenant when taken over by the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are clippings from home letters.





THE FLAGS OF FRANCE



## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

FROM September 21, 1917, with a gradually changing personnel, Section Six-Thirty-Five was stationed at Mourmelon-le-Grand in one of the permanent *barraquements* of the *Camp de Châlons*. *Postes* were at M4, Village Gascon, Bois Sacré, and Hexen Weg, with evacuations to Hôpital Farman and Mourmelon-le-Petit. From the latter places we did, in addition, rear-line work to Saint-Hilaire, Mont Frenet, and Châlons. Through the bitter winter of 1917 the Section's Division, the 97th, was continuously in the lines. There were frequent *coups de main* and the constant threat, expressed in leaflets dropped by Boche *avions*, that Christmas would see the entire region including Châlons in German hands. In anticipation barbed wire was strung and trenches dug kilometres back of Mourmelon, but by January 20 no attack had occurred and the Section moved back, just as a thaw set in which disrupted most traffic, and went *en repos* at Grandeville, near Mailly. Here the 97th Division as such went out of existence. The artillery, *génie*, Algerian cavalry, and medical corps of the old Division remained, but to them were added three regiments of cuirassiers — the 5th, 8th, and 12th — and the Division was renamed the 2<sup>e</sup> D.C.P. of the 2<sup>e</sup> C.C.P. (*Corps de Cavalerie à Pieds*). The Division remained in training until March 23, when a move was made to Aube on the Châlons-Verdun road. Sudden orders started the Section with its Division on a rush for the Somme. The convoy set out on March 27, over jammed and muddy roads, with stops at Juvigny and Breteuil, and finally reached its cantonment at Oresmaux. For two weeks the Division fought, and after terrific losses succeeded in stopping the German advance. During this time the Section served *postes* at Rouvrel and Dommartin, with evacuations to Ailly. It just escaped capture *en masse* at one time, and on several other occasions individuals found themselves between the lines only to make almost miraculous escapes.

First Sergeant Richards, having assumed in addition to his own the duties of mechanic, was wounded slightly while repairing a car under fire, and the Section later received a *Corps d'Armée* citation for its work.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

April 13 the Division moved back, with short rests at Campdeville and Pernant, until on May 7 it was again in line, this time in the supposedly *repos* sector west of Soissons. The Section was quartered in *abri* grottoes above the Aisne at Fontenoy, with *postes* at Saint-Mard, Épagny, and Vézaponin. Activity began to increase about the 25th, then suddenly on May 27 the violent Boche attack began. Our base was moved back to the Ferme l'Épine, but we lived by our cars and continued to serve the *postes* until the Germans took the villages. On the 30th we worked from Vic-sur-Aisne evacuating the wounded from Morsain, through which the French streamed in retreat. Even as we worked here, the town was being blown to pieces and behind it batteries drew up in open fields, opened fire, and then retreated once again. Orders sent us across the Aisne before night because the French expected to have to destroy all the bridges before the next day. For two nights and a day we bivouacked beside the *route nationale*, in the dust and rush of the retreat, while trenches were being dug along it, and we made impossibly long evacuations to Compiègne and Villers-Cotterets. There was a terrifying sense of desperation and hopelessness in the air, even when on June 1 the enemy seemed at least temporarily halted just north of Vic. Our Division came "out" and we settled at Ferme l'Épine, where the Foreign Legion too was quartered. The Germans again advanced, the *saucisses* glared down at us, and the machine guns stuttered close at hand again. The *cuirassiers* were thrown into the uncertain lines in the woods near Cœuvres on the 5th. We had *postes* at Saint-Pierre l'Aigle, Château Valsery, and Montgobert, with evacuations to Taillefontaine. Again unexpectedly the Germans attacked on June 12 with a vicious *barrage*. In our Valsery *poste* Nazel was shot through the thigh by an *avion* machine-gunning the place, then Eddy was wounded by a shell and a little later Conklin was killed near Montgobert. In the haste of retreat the French first line was established along the road on the hillside back of Château Valsery, where were three of our cars and half a dozen of our men. They were between the lines in the valley swept by machine-gun fire, but completely cleared the *poste* of wounded and got back to the Section unhurt. Three days more we served, taking over for a day the work of the colonial division which relieved ours when its own French section was late in arriving. Then on the 15th we started for Beauvais, going *en repos* at Bonlier.

June 28 part of the Section entrained on flatcars for an unknown destination, and next day the remainder set out by road with the *R. V. F.* After a slow three-days convoy we were

## SECTION SEVENTEEN

---

settled at Hargéville, near Bar-le-Duc. For two days we were attached to the 117th Division and worked with it north of Les Islettes in the Argonne; then our old Division recalled us, our place being taken by S.S.A. 14, and we hurried to Génicourt, taking up *poste* service immediately. Thus in twenty-four hours we had served at the front on both banks of the Meuse. Here we settled down with *postes* before Rupt in the Woivre forests.

On September 8 we left Génicourt, moving back to Ravigny Hospital on the Souilly road. The 26th Division had now relieved us, and both divisions were attached to a colonial corps serving with the First American Army. On the 11th we moved up to Troyon on the Meuse Canal. Next day our Division attacked in conjunction with the Americans, taking 2800 prisoners. The advance was greater than had been expected, and on the 16th we shifted our base up to Deuxnouds, serving a *poste* at Avillers in the Woivre plain and two other *postes* on the hills above.

September 20, on one of their nightly air raids the Boches picked Deuxnouds as their objective, dropping eleven bombs directly behind our line of ambulances, ruining eight of them. The first of the bombs wounded "Shorty" Hannah<sup>1</sup> so terribly that he lived only a few minutes. Muldoon and three Frenchmen were severely wounded also, but recovered. We went to Lacroix-sur-Meuse to await orders on October 18. Starting for Nancy on the 23d, our orders were changed when we reached Commercy and we headed toward the Argonne, going to Dommartin-la-Planchette, west of Sainte-Ménéhould.

Beginning November 2, when we were suddenly ordered to Ripont, which was merely a name, the village having been absolutely wiped away, we advanced steadily with stops at Saint-Étienne, Bignicourt, and Amagne, arriving on the 9th at Hagniville. On November 10 the Division went into line, and during the evening took Mézières and Charleville across the river. The attack planned for the following morning was arrested by the news of the Armistice, which found us quartered in Boulzicourt. Next day we moved into some large and comfortable barracks in Mézières, where we remained until the 17th, when our advance into Belgium began. We went forward through Vresse to Paliseul. We were some twenty-four hours behind the Boches and were supposed to follow them at this

<sup>1</sup> Fred A. Hannah, of Scranton, Pennsylvania; joined the Field Service in July, 1917; served with Section Seventeen; later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service; killed by aeroplane bomb on September 20, 1918.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

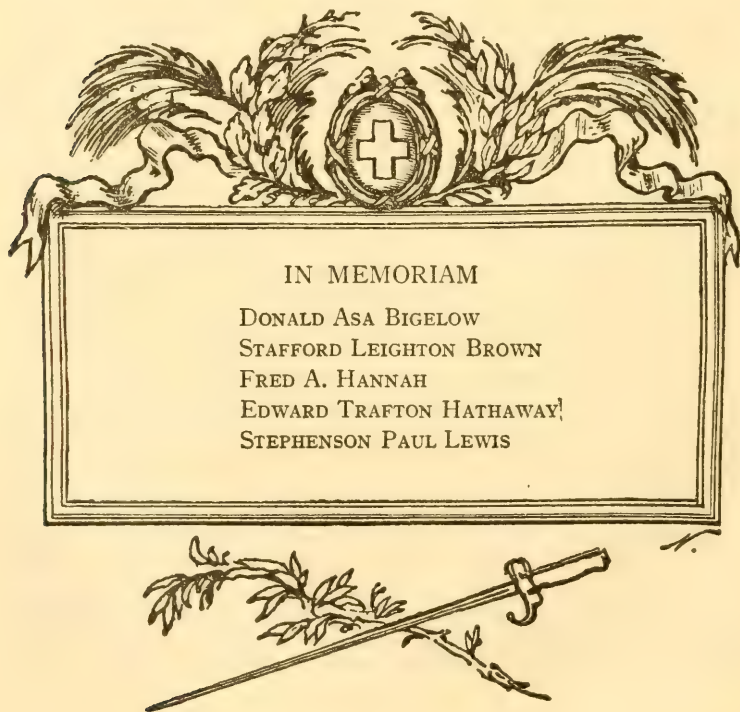
---

interval. After passing through Saint-Hubert, we stopped at Drinkelange, where we lived for two weeks in a frame building with only occasional trips carrying *malades* to Bastogne. On December 11 we started into Germany, crossing the line at Dasburg, and spending our first night in Daleiden. We continued through Neuerburg, Bitburg, Schweich, and Simmern, reaching the Rhine on December 23. Christmas we spent in Salzig, then two days later went down the Rhine to Mayence. Our Division relieved a Moroccan division in holding the bridgehead, and we had several *postes*, one at Worms.

February 14 a new section relieved us, and leaving them our cars we took train for Metz, then shifted to the Paris express. After one day in Paris we began the first lap of our homeward journey and started for Ferrières and Base Camp.

CARLETON FAY WRIGHT <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carleton Fay Wright, of Plymouth, Massachusetts; joined the Field Service in October, 1917; served in Section Six-Thirty-Five of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service for the duration of the war.



## *Section Eighteen*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I & II. ERNEST R. SCHOEN

III. ROBERT A. DONALDSON

## SUMMARY

SECTION EIGHTEEN left Paris on May 8, 1917, going to Glorieux, near Verdun, working the *postes* of Bras and Montgrignon, and thence to Thonnance-les-Moulins *en repos*. It worked in the French attack at Verdun in August, where the Section received a divisional citation. From Verdun it went to Dolancourt, *en repos*, and thence to the hospital at La Veuve, in the Champagne, near Châlons-sur-Marne, in October, where the break-up took place and its U.S. Army régime began as Section Six-Thirty-Six.





## Section Eighteen

Come, come, O Bard, from out some unknown place,  
 Come and record, in words and songs of fire,  
 The valiant deaths, the struggles of the race,  
 The fight to check an Emperor's desire!  
 Come strike thy harp; the force of man is hurled; —  
 Give us an Iliad of the Western World!

ROBERT A. DONALDSON

### I

#### TO GLORIEUX

ON May 8, 1917, Section Eighteen left Paris for an unknown destination. All of the cars, in the park at 21 rue Raynouard, looked very gay in their new paint with the crossed French and American emblems emblazoned on their sides. Each man glanced over the group and chose the car that appealed to him most, the choice usually being governed by the facility with which the engine could be started. During the next few days there was a mighty tuning of motors, inspection of equipment, filling of *bidons*, and making of trial spins. Finally the name plates were attached and everything put in readiness. About 9.30 A.M. Paul Kurtz,<sup>1</sup> our *Chef*, gave the signal,

<sup>1</sup> Paul Borda Kurtz of Germantown, Pennsylvania; Harvard, '16; served with Section One and as *Chef* of Section Eighteen; in the Field Service from

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

we left the park, lined up on the *quai* in numerical order, made one last *adieu*, and passed out through the streets and boulevards of Paris in convoy formation. It was a proud moment for us all.

Our final stop for the day was at Sézanne, where we parked our cars in the court-house square, and found that the day's run had been rather remarkable, every car having got through in good order. A can of "monkey meat," a hunk of bread, and a bar of chocolate served for supper, after which the cots were set up in the cars. Some of the men, however, preferred the grand stand. Needless to say, it was not necessary to rock the Section to sleep that night.

Early the next morning we took the road again and soon entered the valley of the Marne, a country of plains and rolling fields which smiled in the early sunshine, for nature had well repaired the ravages of man. It required a being without a soul to devastate such a spot as this. Now the roadside graves grew more numerous, and we felt that we were passing through a region where world history had been made. From Vitry-le-François, we hurried to Bar-le-Duc, where we were directed to Fains, a treeless, uninteresting little place of one street, which was our temporary headquarters. Two days later the coveted order came authorizing us to proceed to Verdun.

An early start was made from Fains, and the convoy passed through the edge of Bar-le-Duc and then out into a fine rolling country over a good road that led us slowly on among never-ending vistas of hills and valleys, woods and fields. We were now on the main artery of communication with Verdun and there was much to catch and hold our interest. About noon we arrived at Vadelaincourt, which was to become our regular "port of call," and we then passed into a section where trenches and barbed-wire entanglements formed a goodly portion

August, 1915, to July, 1917; entered French Aviation and subsequently became a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Aviation; killed on May 22, 1918, upon returning from a patrol, when his machine took fire.

## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

of the landscape, and where, in the distance, could be heard the occasional boom of a gun, while about us were ammunition dumps, parked *camions*, cavalry *en repos*, and other military essentials that led us to believe that at last we were going to have a first-hand view of "the real thing." As we turned into the edge of Verdun, and the ruined houses began to rear their fragmentary walls, we realized that the description of this locality had not been overdrawn. Skirting the edge of the town we swung into the cantonment at Glorieux and brought our cars to a halt.

At Glorieux we relieved Section Eight, which had done arduous service in this sector in the various attacks of the preceding months. Our cantonment was about one mile from the citadel of Verdun on the southwest side, and was located on the slope of a hill from the crest of which a large portion of the defences to the north of Verdun could be seen. It was made up of several stone hospital buildings and numerous long frame barracks. The *bâtiment* which Section Eight evacuated the morning after our arrival, and which we took over, was a commodious one and we were able to fix ourselves up very comfortably, indeed, these quarters being considered among the most comfortable at the front. In an adjoining *bâtiment* was an English section, also numbered eighteen, and attached to the French Army. They did evacuation work alternately with us, and the two groups were thrown close together and became very firm friends.

### BRAS — MONTGRIGNON — MAISON NATHAN

At the outset only two *postes de secours* were assigned to Section Eighteen, one being located in the ruins of the village of Bras and the other across the Meuse from the village of Thierville, and known as Montgrignon. The village of Bras was near the Fort de Côte du Poivre and about four miles north of the citadel of Verdun, the *poste de secours* being installed in a well-constructed *abri* which, however, abounded in rats and was pervaded with the

odor of acetylene gas used for its illumination. This town formerly housed about fifteen hundred inhabitants, but at this time there was hardly a wall standing, and the ruins were intersected in every direction by communication trenches. When the *poste* was taken over, it was about twelve hundred yards from the German first-line trenches.

As the road to Bras could not be used in the daytime, the wounded were brought down the canal in a *péniche* and unloaded at the *poste* at Montgrignon, from which point the ambulances carried them to Maison Nathan, a residence originally built for and occupied by General Bouvet, who planned the fortifications of Verdun. It was a sort of villa constructed on three sides of a square, the fourth side opening on a very pretty garden, which also was cut up by communication trenches. The fruit trees were sadly shattered, and among the flowers lay unused hand grenades, unexploded *obus*, and various other specimens of the flotsam of war; but still the apple blossoms, the lilacs and the columbine — the bleeding heart of a flower which typifies France — made a brave show. The Maison, which, I may add, was just inside the Saint Paul gate at Verdun, was badly shell-torn, and as it was still bombarded, the wounded were handled in specially prepared rooms in the cellar. In a word, Maison Nathan was a kind of clearing-house, where the doctors classified the wounded or sick, according to their hurt or ailment, and then tagged them for evacuation to the various hospitals in the vicinity. So here in the courtyard we kept our cars ready to go to Bras or Montgrignon or to the surrounding hospitals.

In the beginning we were assigned, as quarters at the Maison Nathan, a room in the cellar adjacent to the kitchen, a hole with only artificial light, partly electric and partly from oil lamps. We slept fully clothed in the beds and dared not investigate the blankets. A cat and her kittens ate and slept on these same beds. Later, a room was secured on the first floor which was made





*Painted by Charles Hoffbauer*

"DUCK AND DODGE AND TWIST IN THE DARKNESS"





## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

fairly comfortable, and where at least fresh air and sunshine could be had, though at night the windows had to be carefully covered in order that no light might show outside. In case of bombardment, the *abri* was quite handy, and we knew, in the dark, every foot of the way thereto.

### VARIETIES OF WORK

As a general thing there was sufficient variety in our work to keep us entertained while on duty, for there were the *blessés*, the *brancardiers*, and the *poilus* to talk to, the ruins of the town to explore if time permitted, reading and writing and many arguments on various topics, all of which caused the time to pass away very pleasantly. But the men were not allowed to visit Verdun, nor to stray far from the cantonment, particularly in the directions where batteries were stationed. Yet, just before dusk, the top of the hill behind the camp was quite a gathering-place, as from there could be caught glimpses of Douaumont, Côte de Talon, Côte du Poivre, and other points of interest, while the flash of the guns, the bursting of *obus*, the illumination of the star-shells, and the display of the signal rockets were a never-ending fascination.

On the road to Bras it was duck and dodge and twist and turn, and when the eye-strain became too great, we sometimes parried things that did not exist. Along the Faubourg Pavé we went, and up the Belleville Hill, striving to make it in "high." A turn to the right at the top and it was a straight run to Bras, with the *camouflage* on the left and the open fields on the right, and plenty of traffic rattling by with the flash of a searchlight here and there to indicate positions, or a dazzling glare from a star-shell that soon expired and left the darkness blacker than ever. So a wave of relief swept over us as we passed under the waving arches of *camouflage* that graced the streets of the ruined town, and this feeling was accentuated when we slipped the car into the shelter and we

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

ourselves descended the steps to the *abri* where the *brancardiers*, the rats, and various odors welcomed us. We shan't forget in a hurry that road to Bras.

### EN REPOS — THONNANCE-LES-MOULINS

ON June 28, we were notified that we should leave the next morning to go *en repos*. In view of the expected offensive in the near future in which our Division was to take an important part, the soldiers were to be given a good rest behind the lines and the Section was to accompany them. So the cars were loaded that day, and the next morning early we took the road to the rear after seven busy weeks in the immediate sector of Verdun. The convoy had a pleasant run through some very charming French country. The day was ideal, and the wealth of color in the landscape suggested the hand of a master-painter. We followed the broad highway to Bar-le-Duc, and were interested in seeing civilians again while the sight of the feminine filled us with wonder. At Suzanne-court our cars were parked near an ancient and run-down château where quarters were secured for most of the boys. The stores were unloaded and set up, and after a good meal we were all glad to "turn in." The next day, however, we received a jolt. The French authorities had sent us to the wrong town, so we had to pack up again, bid good-bye to our new-made friends, and seek quarters ten kilometres farther east. A short run brought us to our destination — Thonnance-les-Moulins — a small village with only two cafés, nestling in a valley among some well-defined and wooded hills and with a delightfully clear and cold little stream near by where the drivers could scrub themselves and their cars. These cars were parked in a field behind the *mairie* and adjacent to the stream, while the kitchen and the *atelier* were set up in the stable-yard of our main billet.

The men who had the good fortune to be quartered among the townspeople now experienced the exquisite pleasure of sheets, pillows, and feather mattresses, some-

## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

thing it was mighty difficult to pull us away from in the morning. The old peasant women who rented the rooms did not understand our habits any better than most of us understand their *mitrailleuse* speech, this being their first experience with the Americans at close range. Everything considered, however, we lived together in peace and harmony, and at the same time had an opportunity to gain an intimate knowledge of the French peasant class.

### THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

SOON after our arrival at Thonnance, the "Glorious Fourth" came to pass. So large United States and French flags were hung at the entrance to our stable-yard, and that evening we had a sumptuous repast, including champagne and several speeches wherein we spoke very nicely of ourselves. It was, indeed, a "large" day, and though the natives did not know what the Fourth of July was, they suspected that it was quite an important occasion. The French Government, in view of the Fourth and the landing of American troops in France, allowed us a two days' leave in Paris, which by travelling at night were stretched into four days. This was, indeed, a welcome break in our daily life, and the "bright lights" were thoroughly enjoyed by those who could scrape together sufficient funds.

In the meantime the regiments of the Division were busy practising for the offensive at Verdun. The *G.B.D.* unit had to listen to lectures on their duties, and as there was little for Section Eighteen to do but sit and wait — we had almost eight weeks of that — the inaction began to tell on the men before the end came. With a world war in progress within cannon sound of us, we felt that we were spending our time as though we were at some summer resort. So when finally we were told, on August 6, that we should return to Verdun the next day, there was universal rejoicing. We packed our things, hitched on our kitchen trailer, and about noon, on a bright summer

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

day, took the road back to what we knew would be a wonderful experience if we lived to see it through.

### "COMING HOME" TO GLORIEUX

To most of us, the return to Glorieux was somewhat like a home-coming; but this time we did not have the commodious quarters that we formerly occupied. Indeed, we were restricted to three rooms, and the remainder of the building was given over to a French *G.B.D.* transport squad, and our English friends of S.S.A. Eighteen, who arrived soon after we did, and who had to be partly quartered in tents. What were barracks before had now to be converted into hospital wards. But otherwise things had not changed much since our departure. The cemeteries had grown a bit, some temporary structures had been erected, and there was an observation balloon station near by that interested us mightily. The hill from which we had been accustomed to make so many thrilling observations was also there, but alas, we were forbidden to ascend to the top. But as many plum trees grew near the crest of the hill, and as we were all very fond of that fruit, this proved some compensation.

During the first week of our stay there, we had very little to do, as our Division, which, in view of the attack, had been augmented by another regiment, had not yet moved up to the trenches. Most of our activity consisted in keeping a car at the Caserne Griboval for the purpose of hauling the *Médecin Divisionnaire* around on his various inspection trips and to his numerous conferences. Occasionally, too, a car went on a special run, and on such occasions the driver was envied. Interest was increased by the fact that the roads were now being strictly policed, illuminated signs placed along the routes at all crossings and various traffic rules enforced *ad literatim*.

Along about August 15th, our Division began to enter the trenches and the *Médecin Divisionnaire* moved his headquarters to Bras, which *poste* we then commenced to work regularly. In the beginning, most of the men



## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

handled were gas cases, for the Germans were using a shell containing a new kind of gas. It had no odor and the effects were not felt to any degree until a good many hours after the victim had been subjected to it, when the eyes, nose, throat, lungs, and stomach were attacked, and, penetrating the clothing, it would raise large blisters where it came in contact with the sweaty parts of the body.

### DRIVING AND LUCK

SUCCESSFUL night driving now became largely a matter of good judgment and luck. As the rain had ceased, dust became an important factor in the art, and when the gas-mask had to be put on, progress on the highway was pure guesswork. The Bras road was barely wide enough in places for three vehicles abreast, and then it was necessary for one of them to run on the dummy track alongside. When an ambulance dashed out from behind some convoy and took a chance in the darkness and dust, it never knew what it was going to meet; and when some vague shape loomed up almost upon one, one had to find a hole somewhere and find it quickly. If there were horses on the right-hand side of the road, you could push them into the ditch and make this hole, and, incidentally, be glad you could not understand the language of the driver. All the other vehicles were larger than a Ford ambulance, and generally you had to rely on a hole being made for you. In the midst of all this, perhaps you might lose a mudguard, dent a fender, or smash a lamp, but that was just a part of the game.

### PANDEMONIUM AT BRAS

THE approach to Bras on the night of the attack was a scene of bewildering confusion. The road was choked with horses and vehicles of every description seemingly mixed in inextricable chaos, *brancardiers* were going forth empty-handed or returning with silent burdens, batteries roared and flashed in every direction, while shells whistled over-

head continuously. The route was lit up by the glare of two burning *camions* which had been struck by German shells, and the ruined town, with its waving arches of *camouflage*, presented a weird and grotesque appearance as the lights and shadows played about its distorted walls and crumbling piles of masonry.

A short while after midnight, gas-shells began to come over, and then the confusion became worse and the difficulties for us increased — for as the breath soon condenses on the lenses of the gas-mask, to see through it at night is well-nigh an impossibility. Horses affected by the gas pranced all over the road, and their drivers, looking like so many ghouls, cursed inaudibly beneath their masks, doubly irritated by their inability to see clearly. In the meanwhile, the traffic assumed more and more a condition of turmoil, and finally everything had to be halted until the worst had passed, while those of us at the *poste* were compelled to enter the *abri*, where every crack and crevice was tightly closed, and what with every inch of space occupied by sleeping, eating, or smoking *poilus*, it was a question of whether the air without was not preferable to that within. But as soon as there was a lull in the gas attack, the ambulances were loaded and started on their way. Most of them, however, did little more than start, for soon the gas was as thick as ever, and again the traffic became badly congested and everything had to halt. With our gas-masks on, we waited, wedged in the mass, while on one side fell the gas-shells, on the other the high-explosives, and overhead occasionally burst shrapnel. Sometimes a shell would find its billet, and the screams of horses and shouts of men would add to the hideousness of the scene. After what seemed an interminable time, the gas let up, the road was partially cleared, and, though still hampered with gas-masks, we crawled and felt our way toward Verdun, where we deposited our burdens at the *triage* with a feeling of relief that no words can describe.

It was during the night just mentioned that Long,

## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

hearing an aeroplane bomb burst behind him, got out of his car, investigated and, finding a man with his leg nearly torn off, immediately applied a tourniquet, using a piece of trace rope, a hammer, and one of his tire tools. He then loaded him with two other wounded into the ambulance, and hurried to the hospital, and thus saved a life by his prompt action, for which he later received the *Croix de Guerre*. This is one of the many fine examples of the work done by our men during this stormy crisis.

### THE MORNING OF ATTACK

DURING the night of August 20 and the early morning of the 21st, the bombardment was intense, and soon after dawn the troops went over, when the road to Bras became a very unpleasant sight, for it was lined its whole length with dead and dying horses and the wrecks of vehicles. Near the junction of the Petit Bras with the Bras road was a particularly gruesome scene, a bursting shell having involved a *camion* and a horse-drawn ammunition wagon, left the bodies of four of the horses, two partially burned, lying in the ditch, the wreckage of the conveyances, and numerous loaded shells strewn all about, while in the midst of the repulsive mess was a *poilu* whose body was completely severed at the waist and the skin burned from the nether limbs.

For the whole of the day the little Fords went up and down the Bras road like so many mechanical toys. The shelling was still pretty warm in the localities roundabout, and the highway was so full of shell-holes that it was a wonder the springs ever stood the strain. In the meanwhile, the wounded were being brought into the *triage* so rapidly that its facilities were overwhelmed, and the drivers had to act as their own *brancardiers*, depositing the wounded in the open courtyard until room could be made inside the building. Finally we even had all to turn in and evacuate them to the railroad station at Souilly, where they were transported to hospitals in cars of other sections.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

August 31st was the red-letter day in the annals of Section Eighteen, when between seven hundred and eight hundred *blessés* were handled and the cars kept in motion almost constantly. The men performed their work efficiently and thoroughly, and the wounded were removed from the *poste de secours* just as rapidly as they could receive the necessary attention and be placed in the cars. Section Four furnished ten cars which worked in conjunction with Section Eighteen during the major portion of the attack, and they are entitled to the greatest praise for the aid they gave us.

Our English friends of S.S.A. Eighteen, who, I may say in passing, had given a very fine account of themselves during the attack, now packed up their "old kit-bags" and left us. We felt rather lonesome at their departure. Finally it was settled that we, too, were to leave on September 2. So we immediately began to set our house in order. The cars were in a rather sorry plight, for there was hardly one that did not bear scars from the work of the attack — rear mudguards gone, fenders pushed in, radiators bent, lamps smashed, holes punched in the bodies, and side boxes knocked off. As far as possible these defects were remedied, the mud was cleaned off as well as could be, and everything put in shape for a long cross-country run, while Section Four moved into our quarters, prepared to take over our *postes* on the day of our departure. And then, at 3 A.M., September 2, we awakened to a wet, drizzly morning, caught a quick breakfast of coffee, jam, and bread, and by the time it was fairly light took our last look at Glorieux and the environs of Verdun, swung into the Bar-le-Duc road, and were quickly on our way to peace and rest.

Dolancourt, which had been selected as our place of *repos*, proved to be a very quaint and pretty little village with fine trees and attractive surroundings. The work we were called upon to do there was similar to that of our first *repos*. The *Médecin Divisionnaire* had his headquarters at Vendœuvre, a pleasant, small town about eight



## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

miles from Dolancourt, where we kept a car on duty at all times, each driver serving twenty-four hours.

The latter part of September was marked by several occurrences of interest, including the arrival of the United States officers to enlist the men in the Regular Army. Several of the fellows departed for home or aviation work, and new men came out to the Section to replace them. But the principal event and the climax of the Section's career was the conferring upon it of the *Croix de Guerre*, in recognition of the work done at the Verdun attack described above.

### A SECTION CITATION

ON the morning of the 29th, the citation ceremony took place in a superb spot, a small plateau just outside of Dolancourt, which was itself nestled beneath in a verdant cup. In every direction stretched the rolling fields and hills covered with vineyards and wood plots, the stately poplar rearing its head wherever the eyes turned, until the succession of green heights seemed to dissolve in the distance, while here and there bright bits of color flashed out where the mustard and the poppy held sway.

Such was the scene when there swung into the field, passing the ambulances, spick and span, drivers at attention, the various detachments of the *G.B.D.* — companies of *brancardiers*, trim and polished for the occasion, and horse-drawn vehicles of the *Service Sanitaire* equipped for various purposes of aid and relief. The Red Cross was everywhere. Indeed, all the units of a *G.B.D.* were present, and each proceeded with military precision and despatch to allotted positions, forming three sides of a hollow square, the fourth side being left open for the *Médecin Divisionnaire* and the reviewing party, who soon arrived, and, with his staff and his decorations glistening in the sun, the former marched around the field and made a brief inspection of the assembled units. Then the individuals who were to be decorated formed a line in the centre of the square, with the *Médecin Chef*



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

carrying the official emblem of the *G.B.D.* and the Lieutenant carrying that of Section Eighteen. Unfortunately, out of our six men who were to receive decorations, only the *Chef*, William Slidell, and young Olmstead, were present. Then the citations of the *G.B.D.* and Section Eighteen were read out and the *Médecin Divisionnaire* pinned a *Croix de Guerre* upon the flag of each, this being followed by the reading of the individual citations. As each of the latter was concluded, he attached a *Croix de Guerre* to the breast of the man cited, and accompanied the act by a few congratulatory words and a shake of the hand. When this was finished, the *Médecin Divisionnaire*, his staff, and the honor men retired to the open side of the square, where they watched the entire organization pass in review.

As the procession swung by in the midst of this wonderful setting, the sight was an inspiring one. And finally the little American ambulances, chugging slowly along in the rear of the procession, slipped over the hill and back to their park, and thus Section Eighteen of the American Field Service passed out of existence as a volunteer organization.

ERNEST R. SCHOEN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Richmond, Virginia; Virginia University, '04; served with Section Eighteen for six months; subsequently a Captain, U.S.A. Air Service.



## II

### THE ROAD TO VERDUN

*On our way from Paris to the Front  
Sézanne, May 9, 1917*

AROSE early. My head and blankets were pretty wet from having slept in a heavy dew. We finally got away about 9.30 A.M. Passed a small monument commemorating the Battle of the Marne, and about the same time the burial plots began to grow rather numerous. Yet there were few signs of devastation, and the bright green of the meadows, with the brighter yellow of the dandelions, made a picture that brought a sparkle to the most tired eyes. Soon we passed some small villages, with here and there a house levelled. It is not possible to imagine that a country such as this could be destroyed by any one who had the least particle of appreciation for the beautiful and picturesque.

*Bras, May 12*

ON the road to Verdun! I sat out in front of the *poste* for a while, watching the flares, the flash of the adjacent batteries, and the soldiers shooting at rats that attempted to cross the road. Eventually I went below and was writing when my first call came. I loaded an *assis* and a *couché* into my machine and started for the Maison Nathan. The strain of my first night's driving was terrific — the continual peering through the gloom, the unexpected appearance of men and wagons, the impossibility of avoiding bumps and holes, and at the same time knowing that every jar and bump meant a pang to the man or men inside — all kept one in a state of suspense that tried the nerves severely.

*May 21*

THE invisibility of this warfare is amazing. One sees the flashes of the guns, but no battery; there are forts, but no men in sight; trenches, but no soldiers. Everything is

under cover, and the ingenuity displayed to bring this about is wonderful. Were it not for the eyes of the armies — the aeroplanes and observation balloons — the wastage of ammunition would be worse than it actually is; and, as things are, it is appalling.

May 23

THE other day I brought in a bunch of lilacs, and it makes a beautiful sight on the table before me. Its vase, a French "75" shell-casing, is rather incongruous, but so is war.

Rather amused at the comments of some English the other night when the bombardment was on. "Silly asses," they said, "throwing things at one another; probably never saw each other in their lives and don't know what they are fighting about." Peculiar chaps, these English, smugly satisfied, but in their way always polite and considerate.

May 24

FROM Montgrignon I brought back one *couché* and three *assis*, the former in a pitiable state — leg broken, arm injured, part of his chest torn away, and his head battered in! My! how he moaned; his cries of "*Oh! la! la! Oh! la! la!*" will haunt my memory for weeks to come. He would raise himself from the *brancard* and endeavor to get water, but they would give him none. His eyes would roll back till one saw nothing but their whites, and then he would burst into tears. God! how these men suffer. Can such occurrences be part of the order of things? Are men born, raised, and educated to be slaughtered like so many animals, and to suffer the tortures of hell and the damned, through the course of it? Perhaps so; but the reason of it all is beyond my narrow intelligence. There must be some great reward to the world to repay the enormous sacrifice that mankind is now enduring.

## NATURE AND WAR

May 26

ANOTHER beautiful day. The country is wonderful. The scarred and riven hills with their wire entanglements are

## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

green and luxurious with grasses and wild flowers; and the portions where are the buttercups are cloth-of-gold. Nature *will* hold her own; but over toward Douaumont way the rage of man has been too much for her healing efforts, and there the hill which marks the fort is as bare as the palm of one's hand. By the way, one can always tell when he is approaching a hospital by the field of crosses which appears just before. The wooden crosses, or *croix de bois*, have been awarded much oftener than the *Croix de Guerre*.

June 7

ANOTHER trip to Bras at 1.30 A.M. I had no sooner arrived than they gave me two *couchés* with directions to beat it back "*vite*." I did, and one poor devil with his side shot away suffered frightfully. How he kicked the sides of the car and called out into the night — ye gods! It was monstrous; but the race with death had to be run. Death won.

### AUTRES PAYS, AUTRES VETÊMENTS

June 16

THE tails of the French shirts have been giving me some trouble due to their astounding length. I hear that the wealth of material is put there as a result of the tendency of the French to omit one of their nether garments. Be that as it may, its disposal is quite a problem and causes me to labor earnestly to avoid knots of cloth that make sitting at times exceedingly uncomfortable. The French may economize in other ways, but in this respect they certainly are prodigal.

June 26

THE English have given a little entertainment which consisted principally of songs and shadowgraphs. The most wonderful thing of the whole show was that the English burlesqued themselves and enjoyed it. After this war I do not think that the line of demarcation between the nationalities will be so closely drawn as before; there has been too much association, and the influence of one

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

upon the other is already apparent. Now that we Americans, too, are influencing the situation sufficiently to cause notice, the resulting reaction of the nationalities upon one another is going to make a still more interesting study.

July 10

AFTER supper I took a long cross-country walk; got some wonderful views and had some excellent cherries. My! How the larks sang. They hover in the air and pour out their notes till it seems that they must drop from exhaustion. Then Frantz and I took a look over the church and graveyard. The artificial wreaths and ornaments with which the French decorate the graves are most hideous, making the cemeteries look like factories.

August 17

IN the afternoon an independent Boche plane slipped over and fired, in their usual nervy way, two French *saucisses*. Some of the English section who were looking on applauded the nerve of the act, and a Frenchman near by went to their C.O. and made complaint. He was informed, for his trouble, that he failed to understand the sporting instinct of the English. The C.O. was perfectly correct.

### AMBULANCE HELL

August 19

WELL, it was a bit of hell last night. Perhaps not so much of a trench hell, but a small-sized ambulance hell. I had barely gone to bed and not yet to sleep when the call came for four cars for Bras, of which mine was one. I got away smoothly in the darkness, and to avoid the traffic as much as possible took a roundabout way past the citadel and through the erstwhile city of Verdun. When I reached the ruins of Belleville I began to run into considerable traffic, but managed to slip by the *ravitaillement* and in and out of the *camion* convoys until I had passed over the Belleville Hill. Here my troubles began.





ABOVE VERDUN



THE VACHERAUVILLE "POSTE" DURING THE FRENCH ATTACKS  
OF AUGUST, 1917



## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

There was an endless procession of traffic moving in both directions over a road that was about wide enough for one. After making several attempts to get control of the middle of the road, I ducked in behind a Buick of one of our English friends, and there I stayed for about an hour, now and then crawling a few hundred yards. Even the little donkey carts passed me, nipping off pieces of my car as they passed. The sky was lit up from artillery fire on all sides. In front of us at Bras a *camion*, set on fire by a wandering shell, was burning fiercely and making a great reflection. Shells burst constantly in the neighborhood, and every now and then a piece of shrapnel would sing by. Besides the roar of the guns there were the steady rattle and creak of the stream of passing vehicles. Of these latter there was a most remarkable variety: the little two-wheeled, low-bodied ammunition wagons with donkeys pulling them, one- or two-horse carts with canvas covers, gun carriages, lumber trucks, horses single, tandem, three, four, and five abreast, motor-cycles, staff cars, ambulances, *camionnettes*, huge *camions*, every imaginable vehicle, and every conceivable kind of military equipment, all mixed, apparently inextricably, in the darkness. Darting in among them were the omnipresent gendarmes and road marshals, shouting orders in a mad attempt to keep the traffic moving and the needs of a great attack promptly served.

August 21

EARLY in the morning I passed a body of Boche prisoners — a pretty hard-looking bunch and some of them quite young. I was rather struck by the consideration shown them by the French *brancardiers*. It is true that many of them were deprived of their insignia, masks, casques, etc., but permission was usually first asked and they were generally given substitutes in exchange. The French are like that. They fight ferociously, but cruelty to wounded or prisoner enemies is an impossibility. A mistake when dealing with the Boche!

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

### "WHERE STAND THE CROSSES, ROW ON ROW"

*Saturday, August 25*

I WANDERED up to the morgue yesterday and watched the soldiers appointed for that purpose go through the pockets of the dead and prepare them for burial. It was a gruesome sight. The one near-by cemetery has had about three hundred additions in the last few days.

*Wednesday, August 29*

THE funerals keep up. The grave-diggers are kept busy. Every little while the coffins go by in front of our *bâtiment* and more mounds appear in the lot near by.

ERNEST R. SCHOEN <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Notes from an unpublished diary.



### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION EIGHTEEN remained stationed at the evacuation hospital at La Veuve, near Châlons-sur-Marne in the Champagne, from the last of October until January 20, 1918. Meanwhile it underwent great transformation. The personnel for the most part changed, the places of the retiring members being taken by men of old Section Seventy, which had hitherto driven Fiat cars. With its militarization the Section became officially Section Six-Thirty-Six of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. It was then attached to the 87<sup>e</sup> D.I. and went in January, 1918, to Mourmelon-le-Grand, in the Champagne in the "region of the Mounts," where the Division went into line. The *postes* worked were a halfway station to Ham and Bois Sacré, with M 4 as a reserve *poste*. The hospitals served were Farman and Mourmelon-le-Petit, with calls to Châlons, La Veuve, and Mont Frenet. The work was light, on the whole, except for a few rather severe but short attacks by the Germans during March, the purpose of which was to *camouflage* the intended attack on Amiens. The Section remained here until April 2, when it gave over its *postes* to Section Fifteen, and started *en convoi* for the Somme front.

Short stops were made at Avenay, Fismes, Pont-Sainte-Maxence, on the Oise, Beauvais, and Amiens, our final cantonment being the little town of Taisnil. Immense preparations were being made by both French and British on this front to stop the supposed second German drive on Amiens. We spent three weeks of waiting here.

The Germans, however, did not attack on Amiens, but on the 27th commenced their Aisne-Marne drive. During the night of May 31, the entire Division was moved in *camions* toward the Aisne front. We followed in convoy the next morning, making Gournay-sur-Arronde that day, and Saint-Sauveur, in the edge of the Compiègne Forest the next. Finally, on June 3, after a terrible convoy over jammed and dusty roads, we reached Lagny, a few kilometres outside of Villers-Cotterets. We later took up permanent quarters in an old mill at Vez. The work was very heavy, as the Germans were still attacking, and we were in line here for thirty-eight days.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

From the 11th to the 14th of June, coincident with their attack in the Noyon-Montdidier sector, the Germans attacked this front heavily, but only gained a foothold of about a kilometre in depth. It was at this time that the French Renault light tanks were first put into action. During the latter part of our stay we took over *postes* at the Carrefour de Cabaret and at Montgobert, as well as continuing to serve the *postes* at the Carrefour de Saut du Cerf, the 136th near Vertes-Feuilles, Puiseux, and the *G.B.D.* at Villers-Cotterets, later moved to Lagny.

On July 12, we came out of line and went with the Division to Pont-Sainte-Maxence again, for *repos*. On the morning of July 15 we moved to La Fayel near by, and, on July 18, as we began to get news of the Foch counter-offensive above Soissons, moved again on a long dusty convoy to Villers-Cotterets, and thence to Retheuil. We went to work immediately, aiding Section Two, which was serving the Colonial Division, working at Saint-Pierre-Aigle, the reserve *poste*, and Vertes-Feuilles and Vierzy, front *postes*. We carried many Americans during this time. The next day we moved to Vivières, and our Division went in and relieved half the 1st Division, and half the French Colonial Division. Our *postes* were Léchelle, Vierzy, Charentigny, Chaudun, with Dommiers as a reserve *poste*, and later, Chazelle as a front *poste*. The work was extremely heavy all the time on account of the persistent attacks for Buzancy and Villemontoire. We carried many wounded from the famous Scotch Division, which contained, among other units, the Black Watch and the Argyll Highlanders. Conditions were terrible. Evacuation was some thirty-five kilometres over crowded roads to Pierrefonds, a distance later shortened somewhat by the taking of *assis* to Villers-Cotterets. The Section was much shocked by the manner in which the American 1st Division left their dead lying unburied. Several hundred were left in this fashion when the 1st Division went out of line. The French buried them as soon as they were able.

On August 2, the Germans retreated back to the Aisne and Vesle, and the Division and Section came out of line on August 6, and back to Villers-Cotterets. A few days later we moved to Dammartin, near Meaux. Then followed a speedy convoy, through Chaumont, Neufchateau, and Épinal to the Vosges, where the Division, now badly cut up, took a position some twenty-five kilometres in extent in the line between Saint-Dié and Raon-l'Étape. Our French Division here broke into the trenches the American 92d Division of negroes.

We moved again on September 1, this time going to Luné-

## SECTION EIGHTEEN

---

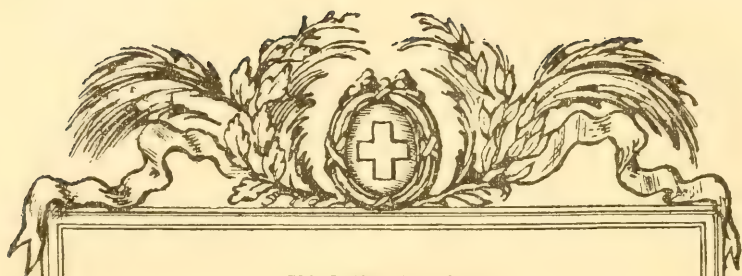
ville, on the Lorraine front. This sector was very quiet. We were cantoned in the city itself, and worked *postes* at small villages at the front. The Division occupied a front of ten kilometres. We remained here until October 18, when we went near by to the famous manure-pile town of Xermaménil, and three days later started a memorable convoy to the Champagne, by way of Nancy, Toul, Ligny-en-Barrois, and Bar-le-Duc, finally arriving at the little town of Dampierre-le-Château, noted for the absence of the château. We spent a week here, finally moving up, under secret orders, to a place on the old line where a town called Ripont had been, where we lived in old German dugouts. Then on to Séchault on the Sainte-Ménéhould-Vouziers road, where we camped in the mud during the Franco-American Argonne-Meuse attack of November 1, expecting to go into action during the secondary stage of the battle around Vouziers. But so quickly was the Grand-pré-Vouziers salient reduced that the Division was not needed, and we were sent back to Ripont, then to Suippes, and finally to Bouy, near Mourmelon-le-Grand, in the Champagne, where we were stationed when the Armistice was signed. Contrary to our former visions of the great day, life went on about as usual. We could not believe it was all over. Even the star-shells the *poilus* sent up at dusk failed to make us realize it. We had driven over these same roads by their light during nights of war.

A few days later, we started a long convoy to the Vosges, by way of Vitry-le-François, Saint-Dizier, and Neufchâteau, to Darney, where we remained a week. We then proceeded to Le Thillot and by way of the Col de Bussang into "l'Alsace Reconquise" — through Wesserling, Thann, and Cernay, finally arriving at Soultz, which the Germans had but recently evacuated. Thanksgiving Day was duly celebrated at the Alsatian town of Rouffach, in the inn of an old veteran of the Franco-Prussian war. We then moved down to the fortress town of Neuf-Brisach, on the Rhine, where we had a car stationed at the pontoon bridge, opposite Alt-Brisach on the bluff across the river in the province of Baden, for the handling of the sick among the returning prisoners. We had good quarters in an old German officers' barracks.

In the middle of January, the Division was broken up, and we were attached to the *D.S.A.* in Mulhouse. We remained here until March 9, when we were ordered in to Paris, *en route* for home.

ROBERT A. DONALDSON<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Section Seventy.



IN MEMORIAM

PAUL BORDA KURTZ  
ERNEST HUNNEWELL LEACH  
GORDON STEWART



## *Section Nineteen*

### THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. PAUL A. RIE
- II. CHARLES C. JATHO
- III. FRANK G. ROYCE
- IV. JOHN D. LOUGHLIN
- V. EDWARD P. SHAW, 3D

## SUMMARY

SECTION NINETEEN left Paris on May 16, 1917, going by way of Saint-Dizier and Bar-le-Duc to La Grange-aux-Bois, arriving on May 19. It served the *postes* of La Chalade and Chardon in the wooded Argonne. The Section remained in this sector for some time, going at last, on September 25, to Montereux, and thence to Semoigne when it was taken into the U.S. Army as Section Six-Thirty-Seven.





## Section Nineteen

Give us a name to move the heart  
 With the strength that noble gifts impart,  
 A name that speaks of the blood outpoured  
 To save mankind from the sway of the sword, —  
 A name that calls on the world to share  
 In the burden of sacrificial strife  
 When the cause at stake is the world's free life  
 And the rule of the people everywhere, —  
 A name like a vow, a name like a prayer, —  
     I give you *France!*

HENRY VAN DYKE

### I

## LA GRANGE-AUX-BOIS

*La Grange-aux-Bois, May 22, 1917*

WE pulled out of Paris May 16, after a gay farewell dinner at "21" the night before, and wound along up the Marne Valley in a pouring rain to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, where we camped the first night. The next two nights we spent in Saint-Dizier and Bar-le-Duc, and on the 19th the convoy circled back through the more or less devastated district southwest of Verdun to this village, where we are to relieve Section Two and make our permanent quarters.

We have unloaded our beds and bags in a large barn, with holes in the roof and walls, and a really dirty dirt floor, over which the rats and fleas frolic nightly. In the

middle of the place are a wooden table and benches, and here we take our meals.

The sanitary arrangements are the following: In the morning when we are up and partly dressed, we take our towels and other implements of toilet and wade through a yard full of manure and mud to another manure-pile and mud-heap, in another yard, where is a well, from which can be extracted dark-brown water, with which we "absolute" our hands and faces, and, once in a while, our teeth.

We have two front *postes*, La Chalade and Chardon, two men being assigned to each *poste*, and relieved every twenty-four hours. To-day I am on *poste* duty at La Chalade, which is an old abbey partly destroyed by shell-fire, and located in a little open valley between wooded hills, with the ruins of a tiny village in the rear of it toward the lines. The ground rises gradually from the abbey, and the crest of the slope must mark the front-line trenches, as the ground in the distance near the summit assumes that white, barren look one associates with the idea of No Man's Land, and the only trees which break the skyline are the torn and leafless trunks of what was certainly at one time a flourishing forest. The building itself, except for the chapel, which is partially destroyed, is used as a dressing-station. Of the chapel, one side-altar alone remains, and there mass is said every morning by one of the *brancardiers* who is a priest. The main part of the abbey, which must have served originally as quarters for the monks and was later remodelled to serve as a private home, is a large, barnlike construction. The interior is bare except for the cots and rough tables of the *brancardiers*. It is impossible to describe the charm and picturesqueness this old abbey has for us, but I'm wondering if perhaps it is n't partly because it marks the scene of our first work at the front. For when the realization comes that it is the dreamed-of moment, that one is actually serving France, actually in the war at last, the surroundings of that moment, however ordinary, are forever after colored with romance.

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

### CHARDON — LA CHALADE

May 26

WE are never very much exposed to direct fire, but we have to pass over a road that is occasionally shelled. For instance, after the bombardment of the roads and neighboring fields this afternoon, there was only one *blessé*. I flipped a coin with the other fellow on duty to see who would take him back to town. I won, and as there had been no shell for about ten minutes, I went out in front of the abbey to crank my car, when, just as I was in the very act of cranking, another shell fell too close to me for comfort. I almost had a fit at the explosion; however, outside of earth fragments, nothing hit me. But no sooner had I got out on the road, driving like mad to get out of the danger zone, than another shell came down just alongside the highway, and I was again given something of a fright. When we hear them whistle, we just duck into the *abri* and await developments, after which we go out and walk around until we hear the next one coming. It is all untranslatable in letters.

To-morrow I go on duty at Chardon, and we drove up there this morning to learn the roads. Although the *poste* there is only a little distance from La Chalade, it is an entirely different sort of place. The road to it leads up a steep hill through the thick Argonne woods, and the *poste* itself is a little underground dugout with dirt and logs piled on top, the entrance alone being visible. We left our car before the door, descended a few steps, and passed through a little passageway into a small, roughly furnished room which looked for all the world like the cabin of a ship. The room was lighted by a small window, dug out from the outside, and was furnished with a table littered with books and papers, one or two rough chairs, a field telephone in the corner, and on the inside wall a curtained berth where the doctor in charge of the *poste* slept. In the rear of this room was the kitchen, with sleeping-quarters for some of the *brancardiers* and a rear exit leading out into the communication trenches.

At Chardon we are provided with rough cots and straw mattresses and we take with us only our blankets, of which I am glad I have four, because I sleep with one folded below me. We are also much better fed at the *postes* than at the cantonment, because we eat with the officers. In fact, our coffee is usually brought to us in bed. The entire neighboring trench system is worked out like a miniature city, with sidewalks, sewers, and steps leading in and out, with everything about as comfortable as it can be made.

May 28

SUNDAY morning I went out to the *poste* and had a very quiet day, sitting in the woods writing letters. After lunch, served in a sheltered summer-house, with the two doctors, there was a little bombarding about a quarter of a mile away, but nothing serious. At supper we had a half-dozen young and jovial *aide-majors* and the Bishop of La Réunion, near Madagascar, who is a good sport. After supper we telephoned to an old Artillery Captain, at his battery near by, and invited ourselves for the evening. We walked through *boyaux* and barbed wire until we came to the old boy's dugout, where we were received in style and entertained right jovially until about ten o'clock. Unfortunately and unavoidably, I am forced to drink *pinard*, or whatever else is offered, and, although I dislike it intensely, it has absolutely no effect upon me. If I had refused the sherry of the old captain, he would have been mortally offended; so I was compelled to imbibe it in small gulps.

May 31

LAST night, Willcox, Putnam, Johnson, and I walked through the back streets of our village, which is quite pretty once you get off the main road, and reached the church just in time to hear mass, which we sat through to the end. The service was rather gruesome. The acolyte was in regular soldier's uniform, with his gas-mask hang-





A "POSTE" AT THE VERY FRONT





## SECTION NINETEEN

---

ing from his belt, and all the prayers had a military bearing — for peace, for the wounded and dead, for *camarades* in peril, and for the widows and orphans. Of course there were only soldiers present, all busy interceding for Divine grace.

*Sainte-Ménchould, June 10*

THIS afternoon I had to drive three *blessés* to this place, and afterwards Jimmy and I stopped to visit the military cemetery, where are over four thousand little crosses, squeezed side by side with small tricolored *cocardes* on them. It was one of the most depressing sights I have seen, because the majority of the graves were quite bare, without any wreath or sign of remembrance on them. Once in a while we saw a dirty little bead crown or wreath, inscribed "*A mon mari*" or "*A notre fils*," which made the grave even more tragic because it helped us to imagine still more fully the misery thrust upon that particular family. Then I thought of the man who held the contract for the coffins, those who manufactured the flowers and cockades, and who were coining money out of everybody's misery — all of which caused still more unpleasant thoughts. After the visit to the cemetery, we drove to the hospital and took some fruit to Dougherty, who is in bed there with some kind of malarial fever.

### A NIGHT'S WORK

*Wednesday, June 13*

YESTERDAY afternoon, after writing some letters and cards at the *poste*, I went out in the rain and changed a flat tire on my car. As I have only a very hazy notion of the technique of tire-changing, I made a considerable mess of the job, but finally got the old thing fixed somehow. Then I went in and played an excellent game of chess with Belcher, a fellow twenty-four years old, a chemist from Boston, and a shark at chess. Result — a draw. Next we had supper, and after supper Belcher and I sat in our cars talking religion and socialism. About 9.15, just

as it was growing dark, we heard a tremendous crash near by, followed by various minor explosions. Immediately afterwards the *mitrailleuses* began a terrific rattle that sounded like a boy grating a stick along an iron railing. We began to prick up our ears and make all sorts of conjectures; but pretty soon we knew all about it, because we heard a cheery hissing all around us and the branches breaking in the trees too close to us to be agreeable and safe. So deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, we slid out in a hurry and rushed for the *boyau*, from which we had a splendid worm's-eye view of the bombardment that followed. There was nothing to see, but altogether too much to hear, and for a full half-hour the place shook and the air was full of a tremendous noise.

There was a battery of "75's" very close to us, and their sharp, whiplike crack drowned almost everything else. Once in a while, though, we could make out the trolley-car sound of the "150's" as they trundled through the air, and, when there was a second's interruption in the French fire, we heard the German shells exploding in our trenches, and the unceasing rattle of the *mitrailleuses*. Once there was a hiss, a sizzle, and a thud quite close to us, and we knew a German shell had hit and missed fire. This performance continued unabated for a full half-hour, and then everything relapsed into dead silence and pitch darkness.

We knew then that we must get some business from all that firing, and so we did not go to bed at all, but played solitaire until 11 P.M., when we received our first 'phone call informing us that a German *coup de main* had been brilliantly repulsed and that the wounded Frenchmen were beginning to be sent to the *postes de secours*. About midnight the advanced *poste* 'phoned us for one car, and I went up there in the pitch blackness and ran a trifle beyond the place before I noticed my error. However, a friendly star-shell loomed gracefully up over the top of the woods and I righted myself very

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

soon, then I was given a *couché* shot in the thigh, but not suffering much. I ran slowly back with him to the main *poste* where I took on a *brancardier* for company as a lookout, because the night was dark and a lone *couché* is mighty poor comfort. We made the trip to La Grange in good time and returned *de même*. As I was going along a part of the road where I could use lights, a hare sprang up in front of us and ran several hundred yards in the stupid zigzag peculiar to its kind, finally disappearing into the ditch. I only wish I could have got him, as he would have been a fine addition to our next meal.

On the return trip, after I had *eteint tous les feux*, I was going along fairly well when all of a sudden my *brancardier* yelled, "*Attention! Attention! Il y a quelque chose*"; and sure enough, coming the other way was Belcher and his car. We had neither of us seen the other approach and we escaped a collision by about an inch. The result was that we both stopped dead still; Belcher, his *brancardier* and three *couchés* in the middle of the road; I and my *brancardier*, who was on the front seat, with the Ford crouching on the top of a pile of paving-stones poised for a spring, with its motor still going and no tires punctured. After congratulating ourselves on the lucky escape, we all climbed out and, grasping my car by the four corners, placed her gently back on the road again, following which I went on back to the *poste*, where I was told to keep right on going to the advanced *poste* in order to collect three *couchés*. This I did, and ran them back most of the way without trouble. Unfortunately, however, we struck a dense fog, in the midst of which I narrowly escaped running down another one of our cars that had been summoned to the rescue. Finally, *au beau milieu*, the same tire that I had changed in the afternoon gave an agonized gasp and passed peacefully away. Fortunately, this happened in a place where lights could be used, and after looking for a nice spot, I stopped, unloaded the *blessés* on the road, and went to work in the mud. The *blessés* all complained of the damp, so I immediately

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

pulled out my little whiskey flask, and the *brancardier* and the three *blessés* soon drained it very gratefully. As I was in the midst of the tire-changing, Belcher came back; so I stopped him and gave him the three fellows to hustle through to La Grange. Then I returned to the *poste* in the very early dawn, about 4 A.M., only to find two more *couchés* at the advanced *poste*. I got those into La Grange about 4.45, and that early damp dawn was the coldest part of the night. Then I took my heavy overcoat at the cantonment and a cup of tea at the hospital and drove back like a lunatic. It was 5.45 and broad daylight when I lay me down to sleep, just removing my coat and shoes. But I was awakened about 9 by the old Bishop poking his head into our dungeon and condoling cheerfully with us for our hard work. Finally, about 10 A.M., we got up, and Belcher went down with a couple of *malades*, while I was invited to a special luncheon with the Bishop, an artillery captain, and several doctors. It was a great and wonderful meal — three meat courses, besides the other trifles, and a pie of wild strawberries picked in the woods. We were at table from 12 to 2.30, and after lunch I drove down to La Grange with the Bishop.

By the way, this morning when I was putting my bundle in my car, I found a German *mitrailleuse* bullet on the ground just alongside; so I am glad I went indoors when I did. Furthermore, the unexploded "77" was also found a few yards away, where I saw it lying innocently on the ground before the artillery authorities removed it.

June 18

TO-DAY I was on hospital duty and was called upon to take a Boche prisoner to Souilly. The poor devil was paralyzed and in plaster from the hips down and was as thin as a rail, having been two and a half months in bed and having had three operations performed on him. He was a decent youngster, and Bert Willcox, who came along for the ride, clubbed together with me to get him a couple of oranges to suck on the way. When we had got rid of



## SECTION NINETEEN

---

him, we drove to Fleury-sur-Aire, where there is an immense hospital and evacuation centre, splendidly organized, and seemingly well managed.

We were there to fetch some ice for our hospital, but we also succeeded in begging a goodly lump for ourselves, so that when we returned in the evening we had cold drinks for supper and a wonderful *macédoine glacée* of peaches, oranges, and cherries. By the way, we are in the heart of the cherry country, where we can buy them for seventy centimes per kilogramme, and they are delicious. We have also managed to get beer for the boys, instead of *pinard*, and we are living very economically, saving quite a lot of money. Out of our 4 francs 45 allowance, we probably spend at the very most 3 francs 50 per day. For that, we have everything that is going, including salmon and lobster and fine Bordeaux wines, ordered specially from the central coöperative store in Paris.

### A COUP DE MAIN

July 5

DAY before yesterday, after a Boche *coup de main* at four o'clock in the morning, I had to go to one of the advanced *postes* for two *couchés*. One of them was literally squashed flat, and almost dead when they put him aboard. The other had his leg crushed very badly, and was suffering terribly from the tourniquet that bound his thigh. We lost no time in reaching the hospital, but one of the men had died in the car, and was already cold when we took him out. The old white-bearded priest had come down with me through the ice-cold morning mist, and when we reached the hospital and found our man dead, he pulled a little vial of holy oil from some hidden recess about his person, and proceeded to anoint the poor fellow's forehead with it. The soldier with the crushed leg had it amputated at once, but died during the afternoon from loss of blood.

After a cup of comforting hot coffee, I went back to the abbey and watched the priest in full robes say his early

morning mass at 6.30 in the sunny chapel. I was the whole congregation — I and some sparrows and two dead *poilus* on stretchers, the most horribly mutilated objects I ever expect to see, both hit in the head and blown to pieces. The old priest — Father Cléret is his name — wiggled his long white beard, mumbled his prayers, drank his sacred *pinard*, bowed the knee the regulation number of times, and finally turned, blessed the congregation, and then walked out after shedding his decorations.

This old priest, by the way, is far less urbane and pleasant than the Bishop, but rather better fitted for the job. For instance, this morning, after a *coup de main* he went out between the lines, picked up a wounded soldier and carried him a considerable distance on his back — which for an old boy of sixty-odd years is a lot of work. For his trouble, he will be able to add a palm leaf to his *Croix de Guerre*.

July 14

THIS evening, after a big supper, we went to the Division Headquarters to a concert, sang some songs, and then gave a burlesque boxing match — “Shorty” Loughlin against one of the tallest men in the Section, with myself as umpire, in my best line of comic French. Of course, “Shorty” knocked out the big fellow, and we rushed on a team of comedy *brancardiers* and hauled off the victim on a stretcher, to the great amusement of the onlookers.

July 29

LAST night, after a bombardment of one of the batteries, about twenty-five wounded were brought in. From 10.30 until 1 A.M. they kept rolling in, and Mac and I stayed at the hospital and watched the operations. The first one I saw was performed under X-rays, and what with the smell and the horror of it all, I was as near fainting as I ever expect to be. After that I felt better and watched three or four other operations in all parts of the body, with considerable interest. We have a couple of excellent sur-

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

geons, and they worked like beavers all through the night, operating at two tables in the main operating-room and at another table in the radio chamber. They just ran from one operation to another with the alertness and skill of specialized mechanics turning out their work in batches. At one time there were fifteen men around one table, all working at once on the same wretched patient. Once in a while one of us would have to hold a leg or an arm, or raise the head, or help in any way we could. It was altogether unpleasant, and I am glad I never took seriously to surgery, although I admire surgeons' work intensely.

PAUL A. RIE <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Neuilly-sur-Seine, France; Rugby (England), '14; served in Section Nineteen from its formation, and later as Sergeant, first class, U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are extracts from home letters.



*But he wears the Legion of  
Honor and the "cross de  
guerre" —*

## II

### NOTES FROM THE FRONT

*Decoration Day, 1917*

IN the afternoon some of the Section went up in the cemetery above La Grange-aux-Bois and decorated the grave of Howard Lines, who died of pneumonia in Section One last winter. A delegation of six were also sent to Blercourt, near Verdun, for the purpose of decorating the grave of Edward Kelley, of Section Two, who was killed by a shell during the Verdun attack of last year. Car 630 of this Section was given as a memorial to him.

*June 27*

LOUGHLIN and Alexander paid a visit to one of the French observation *postes*. While there, a bombardment on the part of the Germans commenced. Not long after a report became current that some French officers were threatening to arrest them as spies. So one of the officers of the Section hurried to the *poste* to prevent the two from being sent to Paris as spies, when it was learned that the French officers were looking for them in order to invite them to dinner!

*Sunday, July 22*

LA CHALADE, our outpost, has been bombarded. A number of "150's" have been firing with ruinous effect upon the old monastery, as well as playing havoc with the roads. There are no Sabbaths in war-time. Here the booming of the guns answers for a church bell, the trenches are the pews and the preacher is — hope.

*July 26*

A DELIGHTFUL addition to the evening's repast in the form of a good cake, the handiwork of Pecqueux, and

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

some champagne, in honor of Lieutenant Lory's birthday. *Chef* MacPherson, in a few brief words, toasted him, and the Lieutenant thanked the men in a well-chosen reply.

Just now the night calls are by far the most exciting. Four men are always ready to respond. Up and down hill, dark with the overhanging trees and sable night — brightened, sometimes, for a moment by the flash of lightning, or star-shells — they go forth to the needy with some such feeling as Ichabod Crane must have had on his midnight ride.

*August 4*

LAST night the Germans attempted a *coup de main* near our *poste* at Lac and eight of our ambulances were needed to carry the wounded. To-day a Section library was started in a room near the office and *Chef* MacPherson has promised two lamps. All the books, newspapers, and magazines possessed by individuals are to be handed over to the library for the use of all.

*August 12*

PASTOR KUNTZEL, Protestant chaplain to one of the neighboring regiments, held, in the tent adjoining the mess-tent, a service for the men of the Section. The novelty of the service to us was the singing of the hymns in French.

*August 28*

TO-NIGHT the men made use of the new library. The weather was damp and cold, so a roaring fire was started in the fireplace, and we gathered round while Taliaferro led in the singing. Mac played the mandolin, while Lieutenant Lory entered into the spirit of the evening and furnished the treats. A French soldier with a not unpleasant voice sang several opera selections. Hot roasted potatoes, war bread, and *pinard* were served during the intermissions.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

September 24

THIS afternoon Captain Tucker and Lieutenant Webster arrived to enrol the men in the United States Army service. Seventeen men enlisted.

September 26

ORDERED to move this morning, we rose at 6.30. The day was sunny, but not too warm. By 10 most of the cars were ready and men restless. We started at 12.10, and passed through Sainte-Ménéhould, leaving behind us both pleasant and unpleasant memories, traversing three miles of level, cultivated fields now brown with autumn color, then up a few not too tedious hills, by patches of green still peeking from amid the brown, interrupted now and then by a small wooden cross, the grave of some comrade of the Marne. The long white roads stretched as far as the eye could reach. The kitchen trailer had the saddest misfortune of the journey, for it never showed up till the day following, being left forsaken, "somewhere in France," while we arrived at the little lazy village where we are now camped.

September 27

LIFE at the new encampment started with a trip to the rescue of the kitchen trailer, which was discovered about three kilometres down the road, supported on one wheel, the opposite end of the axle, and, more or less, by three of its four legs. The rescue party, after energetic efforts with a couple of jacks and some hammers and wrenches, finally had the wreck ready to roll, and drawn by the White *camion* it arrived at the village in time to give us lunch only a half-hour late.

Montereux, September 28

WORD came from the *Médecin Chef* to move to this village where we are now *en repos* in a large château with a fireplace in every room and lots of pine boughs to keep the fires replenished. Good Old Montereux!

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

October 26

WITH everything in readiness to move, the men were awakened at 5.30. In groups of three we set forth to our respective positions. Each group had been assigned to a certain contingent on the march to pick up all who fell out, and our cars were kept busy all the time. Every road is burdened with soldiers, pack-trains, gun carriages, baggage-animals, wagons, smoking kitchens, trailers, and ambulances. The day was cold and gray. A mist hugged the ground, which was so thick that the marching soldiers looked like a phantom army appearing for a minute only to be lost to view again. In and out of the mist one could see the busy little ambulances, darting, dodging, and snarling up and down hills, through dirty, ruined towns carrying the sick and footsore. We put up for the night in an old, deserted house, cold and uninviting, where it was dark when the cars began to arrive.

October 27

UP at 5.30. Like ants on a loaf of bread the cars climbed the neighboring hills for another day's hard work. Another town to sleep in, with thirty-five in the garret of an inn.

### MARTYRED REIMS

*Reims, November 21*

THE guns are roaring. Hardly a house but has a scar. In one park of the city is an arch — erected by Cæsar to Mars, the God of War. What a grim joke to the shell-torn city! This evening there was a *coup de main*. Many shells were sent in. It is raining. Think of the soldiers in the trenches!

*Reims, November 30*

I WISH I could adequately describe my first impressions on beholding this city. Imagine yourself suddenly thrust into a deserted town, where all the marks of former beauty and prosperity remain even in the midst of ruins. The church bells are silent. The car tracks no longer rattle to

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

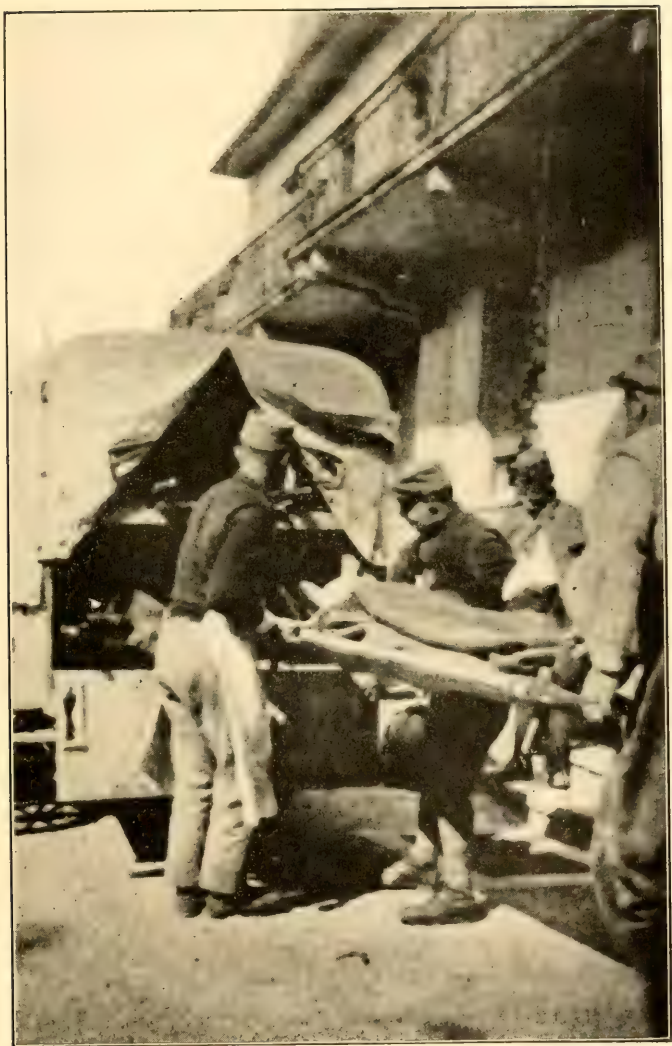
the moving tram. The shops which had formerly echoed to the merry laughter, the gossip and confusion of bargain days, are silent, deserted, and many are crumbled heaps of plaster and bricks. Piles of *débris* fill all the streets. Broken glass lies everywhere. Whole blocks have been burned or shell-torn to mere skeletons of chimneys and walls. Over all, the spires of the cathedral still cast their holy shadow, like a mother determined to defend her home and her children from all wrong. Silently we steered our cars along the paved way — no traffic or busy shoppers to be dodged, no traffic policemen to stop us; only a wounded city and a few shells to tell us our mission.

*December 1*

ONE week half the men under Sergeant Shaw take up their work at Reims, while the rest of the men, under Sergeant Bigelow, do evacuation work at Soissons. The two groups change places every other week. At Reims the quarters are comfortable, some of the men being lodged in a house formerly occupied by a prosperous wine merchant. A garage close by furnishes a protection for the cars. Some men live at the hospital, a large affair where the great rooms for the sick and wounded are twenty-five feet underground. At Soissons we have a barn and a dark, dirty house to live in. The barn is much the worse of the two. At Reims there is some activity, but not so much as advertised. Every fair day sees many aeroplane battles. The shells come in frequently. We have been occupied lately in carrying gassed men.

CHARLES CONRAD JATHO <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Albany, New York; Cambridge Episcopal Theological School; joined Section Nineteen in June of 1917, served in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the remainder of the war. These quotations are from an unpublished record of events.



LOADING THE AMBULANCE





### III

#### "REDPANTS" AND A REPAST

*Fleury, 11 a.m., June 18, 1917*

AT 6.30, just as we were going to eat, I had to go out again, on to this village about twenty miles away, this time with a fellow who had been hurt in an accident. We got over here around 7.30. The fellow who waited on us — "Redpants" we nicknamed him — tended to the telephone. He asked the French non-commissioned officer who had come with me, and who was formerly the Liverpool agent of the French steamer line, if he had ever used a telephone. "Redpants" had to leave his *poste* to attend to us and thought maybe the *brigadier* could ask people to wait till "Redpants" returned if they called him at central. The *brigadier* said he had seen a telephone used once or twice; but "Redpants" would not trust him. By this time we were getting a little hungry, and asked "Redpants" if it were possible to get something to eat from one of the kitchens. "Redpants," who evidently stands in awe of all authority, said he would ask the *Médecin Chef*, and see. We politely told him to go to the Dickens, as we thought, under the circumstances, the cook was the person to be seen, not the doctor. Then we tackled the men's and officers' kitchens; but both were closed. However, in the meantime, we had seen some nurses in white eating, and I told the *brigadier* I thought we could count on them to get us what we wanted. So I finally got up my nerve and, in my beautiful French, tried to ask for a little bread, whereupon I was immediately invited to come in and have a regular meal. The lady in charge, who had the *Croix de Guerre* with the palm leaf, went to a lot of trouble for us and we had quite a feast — beef, ham, bread and butter (a luxury), jelly, nuts, cheese, and figs. We were informed later that what was done for us was quite

irregular, "though done for us with pleasure." The lady, who spoke English, said her mother was an American. When "Redpants" came up for us, he was overawed and must have thought us very, very big guns, for afterwards we learned that the lady with the *Croix de Guerre*, who had so kindly entertained us, was no other than the daughter of M. Clemenceau, the former Prime Minister of France!

### "PINARD ET CANON"

11 a.m., June 25

LAST night a few of us went with the French Lieutenant and MacPherson, the American *Sous-Chef*, to a very interesting concert where songs of all kinds were given. There was one which the *poilus* and we ourselves liked especially about the "*embusqués*," who "proudly and patriotically" proclaim that "we must fight to the end" and then take a back seat. Another was to the effect that the *poilus* had had their fill of "*pinard et canon*," the former being the rank wine of which we all have allowances, and the latter guns—of which we also have a fair allowance! The former is terrible stuff, and I do not drink it except at *postes* where the water is bad. There was also a song in English. The really impressive ones, however, were two of a far different sort—one a flag song with chorus and band, very moving, and a tenor solo about "those sweet and happiest moments when we rest while on the march, close our eyes and see a white house and the family there, and the birds swinging in the trees—every one happy." That was the gist of the French words. It was sung wonderfully well and was not too sentimental, even for an American.

It is fine to be with such a splendid bunch of men. For instance, at this concert we could look around and see fellows who had been wounded two or three times and have returned to the trenches. Then there was a very snappy and likable lieutenant who knew a little English, and was generous with his cigarettes, and whose men

## SECTION NINETEEN

---

hung around him as though they rather worshipped him.

June 29

WE pick cherries, now, and live a life of ease. There are lots of huckleberries, too, and we eat not a few, but it is too bad to have so many of them without any pie or cake.

### FATHER CLÉRET

July 1

WE have just had a very good dinner to celebrate the return of Father Cléret, a fine old Catholic priest, with the *Croix de Guerre*, who must be between sixty and seventy, but in good physical condition. He has worked as stretcher-bearer — no child's play — although that is not part of his prescribed task at all. A couple of months ago he carried in, all by himself, a wounded soldier from the front-line trenches. All in all he is a very fine old man. He was telling us to-night of a friend of his, a major, who had had two sons killed in the war, who had four other sons in dangerous work, and who, because too old to go to the front without special permission, had asked the priest to help him get transferred. The doctor asked if it would not trouble the priest's conscience to help send a friend to the firing-line. The old priest was a little aroused, and replied somewhat to this effect: "No, it would not make my conscience prick. If it be the best for France, it ought to be done, and my conscience would prick if I did n't do it." This may sound rather flat and melodramatic as I tell it, but if you had been there to see and hear the aged ecclesiastic, the whole scene would have impressed you as it did me.

The other day, when one of the attacking divisions went through our village, one of our fellows spoke with a soldier, not a commissioned officer either, about how he felt concerning the war. "Well," said the private, "I have seen three years of this fight and, if necessary, I am ready for three years more." And in that division this

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

fellow had seen more than the average man of the hellish side of this struggle. It is the spirit of the major, of the old priest, and of this soldier, which cheers one up when one hears so much of France being ready to stop.

### STRAWBERRIES — A CHURCH — OBSERVATION

*Clermont-en-Argonne, July 10*

THIS village, up to which we have climbed, is on the top of a very high, partially wooded hill. We went up onto the roof of the church, which has been shot to pieces very badly and is not very solid, much of the roof being missing, though some parts are fairly safe. We got a beautiful view from there. Some wild strawberries were growing in the earth and *débris* on the roof. No novelist would ever have had the courage to suggest that his hero was picking wild strawberries on an old church roof in sight of enemy observation *postes*, five or six miles away; for we were in sight and were told to go down. The reason for this order was not that the people who are in sight will get hurt, because in spite of the "modernity" of instruments of war, hitting two people at five or six miles' range cannot be done very easily, to say the least. The reason is that the Germans, seeing somebody "observing" from a certain point, conclude that there must be something happening or going to happen soon at that village. So the batteries are ordered to bombard the place, and then there is apt to be "hell to pay" in said village. However, nothing of the kind occurred to-day. Perhaps the enemy did not see us, or more likely they felt that no one who knew his business would be observing them from where we were.

*3 p.m., July 23*

LAST night the Bishop, the dentist, and I indulged in a sort of game of dominoes with cards, where we had to pay the large sum of a penny when we could not play a card. Gambling with a Bishop in an *abri* on a Sunday evening with shells sailing overhead — it's a great life!



## SECTION NINETEEN

---

3.30 p.m., August 2

THE poor fellow whom I last brought down was in terrible agony and plainly dying. On account of the nature of the wound, or rather one of his wounds, he was unable to talk even if he was conscious, which perhaps he was not; but he could not help groaning. If you want something nice to do some day, take a Ford, attach to it a heavy ambulance body, put inside the ambulance a young fellow twenty-three years of age who has been grievously hurt and is passing away in great pain, then drive him eight miles to a hospital, over a road with bumps which jolt the car despite all that you can do, mix in a hill more than a half-mile long to climb, and finally arrive at your destination with the man still alive, though groaning. And at the end, you feel so good at having that eight-mile ride over that you want to throw a stone through a window, or dance, or punch somebody or something. What soothes you a little is to have the *brancardier*, who has accompanied the dying man, say, "You have driven well." It is not the many words the French usually employ when they are being pleasant, but the manner of saying them and the circumstances under which they are said which make them eloquent.

### PREDICTION AND FULFILMENT

4.45 p.m., August 7

A PECULIAR coincidence has just occurred. When the soldiers are going back and forth, they frequently say a few joking words to us about saving a place in the ambulance for them, and our favorite reply is that they are going to get a slight wound and that we will take them down in the morning. To-day, about an hour ago, a rather jolly bunch came along and I joked with one to this effect. Well, just this minute Bigelow had a call and brought back a *couché* with a bullet in his hip, the bullet having evidently broken the bone. It was my friend for whom I said I would save a place. He was conscious, joked a good deal about his wound, and when I said he was early and



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

that the place had been saved for to-morrow morning, he thought it was a great joke. His hip pained him, of course; but these *poilus* never make much of a fuss about pain, and he evidently thought it was fine to see me again and remind me of his reservation.

8.15 p.m., August 22

WELL, we have said our real good-byes to the Bishop. To-night he was here, shook hands all around, and kissed the Frenchman on both cheeks, and he is gone. He is a man whom we all have liked. "*Gentil, spirituel, et aimable, il avait aussi un savoir-faire très agréable.*" That is what they say, anyhow, and my English will not express it any better.

Monteroux, September 29

YESTERDAY we moved again on short notice, and we are now located in an old château at this place, and still *en repos*. At 10 we received orders to get out by 12, which was, of course, impossible; but by 2 o'clock all our personal belongings were in the cars, our office was packed, two tents were down and ready to go, the machine shop on wheels, we had eaten our noon meal, and the last cars were on the road. At quarter to 7 that night our new *bureau* was established, our stretchers and beds were placed, kitchen set going, and a tent pitched, in which we ate. Quite a day's work.

FRANK G. ROYCE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Fulton, New York; Cornell, '19; entered the Field Service and Section Nineteen in April, 1917; U.S.A. Ambulance Service in France during the remainder of the war. The above are excerpts from a private diary.

## IV

### CHRISTMAS

*Christmas Day, 1917*

THE morning of the day before Christmas we spent in getting a Christmas tree and decorating the dining-room with evergreens and holly. Shaw and Smith were responsible for the artistic manipulation of the evergreens, and if you had seen the room you would have said it was cleverly done. That afternoon some of the boys were sitting around our "*salamandre*" trying to melt some of the snow off their shoes, when some one spoke up: "Say, fellows, what do you say if we chip in and buy the kids of the school some toys and candy? I think we would all be happy to do them a good turn." Everybody seconded the motion and collections were in order. Within a half-hour two hundred francs were brought together and Sergeant Shaw and myself were on the way to the nearest big city to get the gifts.

Our cantonment is in a typical French town of about three hundred inhabitants, where the fangs of the war demon have sunk deep and hurt. Yet the villagers have the characteristic peasant optimism, and if you could have seen those people you would have contributed yourself.

When the "committee" arrived in the big city, we went to a little store, in the front window of which were displayed some Christmas toys, and bought nearly all of them. The fact is we bought seventy-three toys and some cakes and candy, as there were thirty-six boys and thirty-seven girls in the school.

This morning Smith again exercised his artistic talent and arranged the toys on and around the bottom of the tree, so that when three o'clock rolled around the tree was all ready for the children, whom the teachers marched

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

down to the dining-room, in double file, regardless of a heavy snow then falling. When the procession arrived, we pulled down the curtains and lit the candles on the tree. Then the children were invited in and they surely were a surprised bunch of kids.

We did n't keep them waiting long, but relieved their anxiety by giving out the presents at once. Jatho, who in the States had had much experience in this useful service, lent valuable assistance, while Shaw, Hope, and Smith distributed the toys, cake, and candy. As soon as this was done, the children passed out, and soon, from the street, through the open door, came the sound of the beating of drums, the blowing of trumpets, the shouts of admiration for their toys, and requests for more candy. Then back to their homes, through the falling snow, the children plodded, each bearing, beside a little gift, a gladdened heart.

In the evening we had our own good time, a Christmas supper — and it was “some” supper, too. We started off with soup, beefsteak and mushrooms, turkey and mashed potatoes, green peas, salad, plum pudding and rum, candied fruit, marshmallows and nuts, winding up with black coffee. During the courses white and red wine and champagne were served. And thus ended a memorable day in the life of Section Nineteen.

JOHN D. LOUGHLIN <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brooklyn, New York; Cornell, '17; served with Section Nineteen of the Field Service and later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above is from a home letter.



## V

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION NINETEEN was visited by recruiting officers September 24, 1917, while working in the sector of the Argonne between the Four-de-Paris and the Avocourt Woods. Men were enlisted on that day, although the Section did not become part of the American army until later.

On September 26, 1917, the Section went *en repos* at Semoigne, south of Châlons-sur-Marne, the following day moving to Montereux close by. At the commencement of the Austrian rush into Italy, our Division, the 65th, was at Camp Mailly, and it at once started for Dormans on foot, the Section following. This march took three days. Then the Division entrained for Italy and we were detached, going to Troissy *en repos*.

We stayed there until the middle of November, when we became attached to the 58th Division of Infantry, with whom we stayed the rest of the war. The liaison took place at Reims, where we served Clos Saint-Remy, the Fromagerie, etc., until the Division was relieved on January 17, 1918. The 58th passed through Épernay toward Châlons-sur-Marne again, the Section having one-night stands until it finally reached Noirliu. Later it moved to Sainte-Ménéhould.

On March 19, 1918, the Division and Section moved into the Butte de Mesnil sector of Champagne, where several cars were hit and the men had enough work for once.

Later the Division was relieved and sent through Châlons, through Épernay, Pierrefonds, Compiègne, to Moyenneville, where it was holding the line on both sides of Cuvilly on June 9, 1918.

The Boche attacked here on June 9, and captured among other things eight of our cars and three of our men. The Section, under orders with the whole Division, retired to Estrées-Saint-Denis, that night moving to Eraine, Saint-Remy-en-l'Eau, and finally to Valescourt on June 14.

The Infantry of the 58th had been all shot to pieces, so we were given three new regiments and made an attacking division — something we had always wanted.

On the 17th of July, we moved over to Vivières, and on the 18th the Aisne-Marne battle started. On the 19th, our *G.B.D.*

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

was moved to Vertes Feuilles with *postes de secours* in Vierzy. Here we worked between the United States 1st and 2d Divisions.

After our Division had taken all its objectives, we were relieved on the 25th of July, returning to Saint-Remy again.

The Division went into line opposite Chevincourt, cleaned the famous Thiescourt Plateau, and took part of Noyon. We came out on September 1, going again to Estrées-Saint-Denis.

On September 24 the Section moved to La Croix Ricard, Genvry, and on to Chauny on the 27th. The Division went into line in front of Tergnier, and when our men came out *en repos*, several days after the Armistice, the front *postes* were in Belgium. The Section moved up behind the troops as follows: To Le Mont de Faux December 7; Montcornet, December 14; Aubenton, January 25, 1919; and later to Rimogne, where on March 15, 1919, we were relieved by S.S.U. 547, and proceeded to Base Camp, *en route* for the United States.

Our three prisoners were all returned alive, one returning to the Section December 25, 1918. The Section received a divisional citation for its work on June 9.

E. P. SHAW <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brookline, Massachusetts; Dartmouth; with Section Nineteen from June, 1917; and in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service for the rest of the war.





## *Section Twenty-Six*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. CHARLES E. BAYLY, JR.

II. GILBERT N. ROSS

III. JOSEPH LÉVÊQUE

IV. ELLIS D. SLATER

## SUMMARY

SECTION TWENTY-SIX left Paris on May 28, 1917, going by Montmirail to Souhesme. On June 17 it left for Camp Chiffour, east of Verdun, where it served at the front the *postes* of Ferme Bellevue, near Fort de Tavannes, Douaumont, and Chevrette-rie. The later cantonment was at Ancemont. It served hospitals at Souilly, Petit Monthairon, Rambluzin, Benoitte Vaux, Dugny, and Vadelaincourt. The Section worked in this sector during the entire time before it was taken into the American Army. Its cars were then taken over by the personnel of Field Service Section Sixty-Nine which later became officially known to the U.S. Army as Section Six-Thirty-Eight.



## *Section Twenty-Six*

Those who have stood for thy cause when the dark was around thee,  
 Those who have pierced through the shadows and shining have found thee,  
 Those who have held to their faith in thy courage and power,  
 Thy spirit, thy honor, thy strength for a terrible hour,  
 Now can rejoice that they see thee in light and in glory.

HERBERT JONES

### I

#### TO SOUHESME

UNDER the leadership of Second Lieutenant Pierre Marchal and of *Chef* A. Musgrave Hyde, Section Twenty-Six was formed at Versailles on May 26, 1917. For two days the men were busy gathering equipment, getting the cars in shape, and saying good-bye to Paris. Then, on the evening of the 27th, with a *camion* section that was ready to start for Dommiers, they were given a farewell banquet at rue Raynouard by the Field Service authorities, and the next morning the Section pulled out of the park in convoy, and crept slowly through the streets, out into the country, bound at last for the front.

We passed over the battle-field of the Marne and, just at dusk, drew up in the *Place de la Mairie* at Montmirail. From that time on we progressed from village to village,

sometimes stopping overnight, sometimes for several days, until at last we came to Souhesme, in the Verdun sector, and parked in a much-abused barnyard at the edge of the town, where we tarried for several days in the mud, impatient to be attached to our division. There was nothing to do, so we sought amusement in haunting the near-by aviation field, where the persistence of two or three of the boys was finally rewarded with rides; or by walking out over the hill where, far in the distance, the gray waste of Mort Homme could dimly be seen. Rat hunts filled the evenings.

During our stay in Souhesme every one had the colic from the water, and the cook, a silk-worker in time of peace, finally, to our infinite relief, had to be evacuated to the hospital. Two of our boys cooked the meals the next day and our spirits rose. Sardines and cheese are not the worst things in the world, but they do grow tiresome after a week or so of almost nothing else; and that is about all the old cook and the new boys were giving us. Gradually, however, things began to get better. A new cook arrived, the rain stopped, and we commenced to dry out. But best of all, we were now attached to the 19th Division and received orders to move into line close to Verdun. So, on the morning of June 17, after being reviewed by the *Médecin Principal* of this Division and by the *Médecin Chef des Brancardiers*, we left Souhesme for Camp Chiffour, the Divisional Headquarters, relieving an English section which had been there for four months.

### CAMP CHIFFOUR — FERME BELLEVUE

OUR farthest *poste* was a ruined house called Ferme Bellevue, well named, for it stood on the top of a hill close to Fort de Tavannes and looked out over the valley of the Meuse and down into the town of Verdun. From it the two towers of the cathedral resembled twin monitors guarding the citadel and city, all of whose scars were hidden by a purple haze which hung over the entire val-

## SECTION TWENTY-SIX

---

ley. The ungainly *saucisses*, swaying and tugging at their ropes, gave to the scene the only indication that there was war in our midst. But our own desolate ruin, with its sandbag-covered *abri*, and the knowledge that just over the hill were the Germans, was stimulus enough to the imagination and we were not long in getting more.

Standing there in the road, with our eyes never leaving the city that had even yet no touch of reality to us, we were suddenly startled by a crashing of guns behind us, and we raised our eyes in time to see a tiny wasplike machine darting out of the clouds in the midst of a rapidly increasing bunch of white puffs. Before we knew what was happening, we saw another spot of white below the *saucisse* as the observer's parachute opened. The great bag itself, after a burst of flame, began trailing downward in a dense cloud of black smoke, while the tiny assailant darted back into the cloud. In the meantime, all around us the French batteries, as if awakened from sleep, began one by one to roar until our ears rang, and the first moment of unrest gave place to one of immense security and interest. The Germans were replying by this time, and we could hear the shells, going in both directions, whistle over us, while we stood in safety under the arc, with our mouths open.

Though there were times like the foregoing when we had interesting experiences, the sector was in general comparatively quiet. From the *postes* the cars were sent, usually at night, but sometimes in the daytime, too, down the far side of the hill, the side that looked toward Metz into the lands of the Germans. Good luck was with us and never a man was injured. There were accidents to the cars, of course. One of them, for example, slipped off the road and turned completely over with all four wheels in the air. But as a rule neither man nor vehicle suffered much during this stay at the front.

Our *postes* were spread along the line to the right of Verdun, from Bellevue, from which we worked about the Forts de Tavannes and Douaumont, to Chevreterie,



on the Verdun-Metz road. The *triage* was back at the foot of the hills on the road to Souilly, and the various hospitals were even farther back, at the Château of Petit Monthairon, Souilly, Rambluzin, Benoite Vaux, Dugny, and Vadelaincourt. Our cantonment was at Ancemont in the centre of the hospital district. Never perhaps did a Section have better quarters — a large house on the edge of the village, with a smaller farmhouse a few yards up the road to serve as office, *atelier*, and living quarters for the Frenchmen of the Section. There was a large orchard behind for the cars — an orchard of cherry, plum, and apple trees, which, ripening successively through the summer, provided fruit almost continuously. It was here that we held our track meet, which attracted such attention from the French soldiers that they challenged us and built a huge field with lanes for the sprints and pits for the jumping. Twice we beat them, but they got their revenge in beating us at soccer.

### STATUS QUO FOR THE SECTION

IN August during the Verdun attack, the 19th Division moved, and for some reason the Section was transferred to the division that came in, the 7th, and became more or less the property of the sector. For the five months from the time we came to that district until the Section was taken over by the United States Army, we kept the same *postes*, travelled the same roads, and did exactly the same work; and during all this period we were usually quiet enough at the cantonment, though from time to time the Boches would shell the town, never, however, with serious results.

It was not until the attack to the north of Verdun that we began to be interested in air raids. As reprisals, perhaps, for the loss that they had sustained, the Boches began to send nightly bombing parties aimed principally at the aviation fields of Souilly and at the hospitals at Dugny, Monthairon, and Vadelaincourt, often dropping a few "*microbes*," as the *poilus* call the bombs, on our



CHATTANCOURT STATION NEAR VERDUN — THE SECOND-LINE TRENCHES



WHEN LABOR SLACKENS



## SECTION TWENTY-SIX

---

village and firing with their machine guns on the cars in the road. The most violent bombardment that we had was on the night of October 2, when, with the help of a full moon, the enemy flew back and forth over the main street, throwing bombs into the cantonments of the troops. On this occasion all of the cars were called out at once and worked for several hours under fire. In fact the bombardment was so serious that the village was evacuated of all the automobiles and artillery sections, and the *sanitaires* alone were left. In this connection the Tenth Army Corps decorated with the *Croix de Guerre* the Section as a whole, and six of its members. On the afternoon of October 11 the Colonel of the Thirteenth Hussars, who was stationed in the château, held a ceremony and pinned the cross on these men, on the flag of the Section, and on some French soldiers who had been cited at the same time.

Soon after this the boys finishing their engagements began to leave the Section, and on the 24th, when Section Sixty-Nine came to relieve us and to take over the cars, the *postes*, the cantonment, and the work which we had grown to think of as intimately ours, the most of the personnel of old Twenty-Six scattered, some men going into aviation, others into artillery, and some into infantry and other services of the United States Army.

CHARLES E. BAYLY, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Denver, Colorado; Princeton, '18; served with Section Twenty-Six until October, 1917; subsequently a *Sous-Lieutenant* in the French Artillery.



## II

### LENDING A HAND AT VADELAINCOURT

*August 23, 1917*

ABOUT three o'clock on the afternoon of the 20th the *Chef* came running out with an order to go to a hospital twenty miles away and do it quickly. When we got there we found the place literally packed and jammed with German and French wounded — and most of them in awful shape; we were kept very busy evacuating them. In the evening at the big hospital in Vadelaincourt we ambulance drivers were grouped together talking about nothing much when suddenly a German airplane, with his motor cut off, dropped out of the sky, and three bombs landed about five hundred yards away from us. Then for over two hours in the darkness of night that town was raided by a whole flock of planes, which followed each other in rapid succession dropping bomb after bomb. The third plane set fire to a hospital, making a ghastly scene of it all — the men rushing for shelter in all stages of undress and in all stages of fear, the Boche planes circling overhead, lit up in the red glow of the fire. On top of that some one yelled, "Gas!" A nice "bunch" that will drop poison gas on a hospital! I'm beginning to appreciate the French point of view in regard to the Germans. On my way out of town I passed the hospital, which was still burning. I finally got out of that place, delivered my wounded, including a doctor and a stretcher-bearer, and returned to the cantonment at 3.30 A.M., feeling that setting fire to a hospital is the limit in abominations.

GILBERT N. ROSS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brookline, Massachusetts; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; joined the Field Service in June, 1917, and remained in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service for the remainder of the war.



### III

#### THROUGH FRENCH EYES

THESE are extracts from the *Journal des Marches et Opérations*, the official Day Book of the Section, kept by the French *Maréchal des Logis*, Joseph Lévêque. These extracts derive most of their interest from the fact that they are from the pen of a French military official.

June 2, 1917

THE Section begins its career by making a series of visits around to the other cantonments near Triaucourt and taking their charges to the hospital at Fleury-sur-Aire.

June 4

THEORY and practice in the use and application of gas-masks. Cantonment at Souhesme very bad and very dirty. The Americans install themselves in a field. The Section has very little work to do. Military instruction in marks of respect.

June 8

STRETCHER-BEARER instruction for the drivers. Cleanliness. Technical inspection. Lessons in driving. Neatness.

June 11

THE Section counts seven sick drivers, including the kitchen personnel. The doctor attributes it to bad water and change in food.

June 16

RECEPTION by the *Médecin Principal*, who extends a hearty welcome to the Section.

June 19

THE Section goes out to a front *poste* for the first time — to the east of Verdun.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*June 28*

SECTION moves to Ancemont. Very good cantonment. Dugouts in case of bombardment. Office and workshop isolated. American quarters comfortable.

*July 1*

As a result of a competition the Section adopts as its insignia the American Bison, a copy of the "Buffalo Nickel."

*July 4*

IN the afternoon, athletic events by the members.

*July 11*

INSPECTION of entire Section by Major Church, delegated for this work by General Pershing, accompanied by A. Piatt Andrew the head of the Field Service. Both officers expressed their complete satisfaction at the general good appearance of the Section and in particular at the perfect upkeep of the vehicles. Major Church was particularly interested in the ambulances, their height, length, carriage, etc.

*September 24*

THREE American recruiting officers arrive at Ancemont to ask the drivers if they wish to enlist for the duration of the war in the Medical Service as ambulance drivers, with the rank of private. For different reasons, of which the principal one is the desire to join a more active service — things have been too quiet here — none of the American volunteers is willing to sign, at least immediately. Consequently, the officers announce that the volunteers will be replaced by other drivers regularly enlisted and trained in America for this purpose.

*October 3*

LAST night German aviators bombarded at two different times the cantonment, causing considerable damage and several deaths. All the American drivers not already on service immediately went to the places bombarded and effectively coöperated in the saving and transporting of

## SECTION TWENTY-SIX

---

the wounded. The fine attitude of the American volunteers as regards courage and devotion to service was remarkably well shown during this raid. The Colonel commanding the 13th Hussars, the commanding officer in this town, and the *Médecin Chef* all praise the fine attitude of the American volunteers. All the facts have been today officially reported to the commanding officer.

October 4

BECAUSE of continual bombardment of Ancemont all the hippomobile and automobile services have received, with one exception, orders to leave this village and canton in the woods. Section Twenty-Six alone remains in its original cantonment.

October 8

IN accordance with the report of the Lieutenant commanding the Section and the report of the Colonel of the 13th Hussars commanding at Ancemont, the General commanding the Tenth Army Corps cites to the order of the Army Corps, S.S.U. 26. Here is the text of the citation: "On the night of October 2-3, 1917, during an aerial bombardment, the personnel of S.S.U. 26, commanded by Second Lieutenant Marchal, hurried to the places which were bombarded, in order to pick up the wounded. The drivers — some of whom did not even take time to dress — showed the utmost devotion in aiding in the search and the picking-up of the wounded, whom they transported to the hospitals, driving their ambulances with the greatest courage under machine-gun fire and bombing by the aviators."

October 11

THIS afternoon the Colonel of the 13th Hussars officially pinned the *Croix de Guerre*, in the name of the President of the Republic, on the Section standard and on several American drivers. After the ceremony the Colonel and other officers came to the Section's cantonment to congratulate the American drivers of the Section.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

October 20

TWENTY-TWO drivers, formerly of Section Sixty-Nine, under the command of the American Lieutenant, Allen Butler, with two sergeants and one corporal, arrive at the Section to complete the number of drivers of whom there were only six remaining of old Section Twenty-Six. The U.S. Army drivers, former volunteers in the American Field Service, were good Fiat drivers — only a few knew how to drive Fords before they arrived — and they know the work of this branch of the service; so the taking over of the *postes* is easily effected. The old drivers of Twenty-Six who are now in the American army remain at the *poste* to show the new members the roads. The Ford ambulances left by the old members are passed over to the new in very good running condition — only one ambulance being in the workshop for repairs at the time of the arrival of the new men.

November 23

INSPECTION by General Bulot, commanding the 7th Division of Infantry. He compliments the Lieutenant on the good standing and appearance of the Section and its personnel, and addressing himself particularly to the Americans the General said how happy he was in having attached to this Division such a young body of Allies so full of energy and good-will, thus assuring the best service possible.

January 1, 1918

S.S.U. 26 will hereafter be known as S.S.U 638 (American Series). The Section will still bear the honor of the *Croix de Guerre* received October 8, 1917.

JOSEPH LÉVÊQUE

## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION SIXTY-NINE was enlisted in the U.S. Army on October 3, 1917, while the Section was stationed at Verdun and doing *poste* work at Bras, Vacherauville, and points farther to the front. They stayed at Verdun until October 18 when they went to Chardogne, a small town not far from Bar-le-Duc. It was in this town that they lost those members of the Section who had seen fit to join other branches of the service or those who sought the old *États-Unis*.

October 23 saw old Section Sixty-Nine fused with Section Twenty-Six and the old Fords of Twenty-Six replaced the Fiats of Sixty-Nine. We took over the Woevre sector and were quartered at Ancemont-sur-Meuse. We stayed in this quiet sector until November 7, when we pulled stakes and finally landed in the Champagne at Jalons about seventeen kilometres out of Châlons on the road to Épernay.

On November 28 we went into line at Villers-Marmery in front of Mont Cornillet, where we spent a quiet winter to the right of Reims. The only action we had here was from the 15th to the 21st of March, when small attacks along the line rather excited the entire front.

On April 30 we left Villers for La Cheppe, between Suippes and Châlons, where we were *en repos*. We left this town on May 7 with our Division which was ordered to Belgium at the moment of the British retreat. We ran in convoy to Belgium by way of Meaux and Abbéville and stopped at Ochtezele. We stayed at Ochtezele until the 22d of May when we went into line near Poperinghe in front of Mont Kemmel.

During June we had our *postes* at Reninghelst and La Clytte. After about a month and a half in Belgium we left for Esquelbecq, southeast of Dunkirk, where we stayed until July 5 when we left with our Division for the Champagne by way of Paris and Sézanne. After a day in Tours-sur-Marne we were called into the mountains of Reims, where we waited in the woods under cover until July 15 during the preparation for the second battle of the Marne.

On July 15 we went into line at Hautvillers, six kilometres north of Épernay, but this town seemed to be too close and we were moved back three kilometres to Dizy-Magenta on the



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

16th. It is from here that we saw part of the second battle of the Marne with our *postes* at Damery and Arty. After the French advance of July 18 we had *postes* at Chatillon-sur-Marne and Villers-sous-Chatillon.

On August 1 we left for Igny-le-Jard, fifteen kilometres south of Chatillon, where we stayed *en repos* until August 17. Our next work was as a reserve at Saint-Hilaire-au-Temple, near Châlons. After our *repos* here, lasting until August 26, we moved to Camp Dillmann, on the Châlons-Reims road, working *postes* at the foot of Mont Cornillet with some *postes* the same as during the winter of 1917-18.

On October 6 we left Camp Dillmann for Mourmelon-le-Grand, whence we went to Souain and to Sainte-Marie-à-Py, where we lived in the woods between this town and Saint-Etienne-à-Arnes until October 11, during the battle of the Arnes and subsequently the German retreat to the Aisne.

October 16 found us in Pauvres, twenty kilometres west of Vouziers, which town we left on October 21 for La Neuville, thence to Saint-Martin l'Heureux, and from there to Louvercy, where we stayed until October 23. We next stopped at Camp au Tombeaux des Sarazins, near Bouy, where we stayed until November 6 *en repos*. Our next move was shortly before the Armistice, when we went to Somme-Py and then to Semide and later to Vouziers, where we spent "*le jour de l'Armistice*."

On November 11 we moved to Sauville and thence to Chevenges, where we stayed the remainder of the month of November until December 16. From December until the 11th of March we spent the time in Torcy-Sedan doing evacuation work for hospitals and supplying civilians with food. On March 11 we were relieved and started on the final journey to Paris *en route* for the United States.

ELLIS D. SLATER <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Chicago, Illinois; University of Michigan, '17; with Section Sixty-Nine of the Field Service from July, 1917; later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

*Section Twenty-Seven*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I & II. HOWARD RADCLIFFE COAN

III. COLEMAN G. CLARK

## SUMMARY

SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN left Paris for the front on June 9, 1917, going *via* Châlons-sur-Marne to Billy-le-Grand in the Champagne district. Its *postes* were at La Plaine, Esplanade, and Prosnes, and it evacuated from Villers-Marmery and from Mont-de-Billy. At the end of the month the Section went to Breuvery, south of Châlons *en repos*. Its next move was to Fontaine-sur-Coole, thence to Mourmelon-le-Grand, with *postes* at Ferme de Constantine, Ferme de Moscou, and Ludwigshafen. The Section then went back *en repos* at La Chaussée-sur-Marne and ended its existence shortly after resuming active service in the region of Suippes, where the Section was combined with old Section Seventy-Two, to be known thereafter as Section Six-Thirty-Nine of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## *Section Twenty-Seven*

Armies of France, advance!  
Forward the line of blue!  
From the Alps away to the Channel sea  
Into the battle to make men free,  
Forward, again, to Victory!  
Hail, Armies of France!

WILLIAM C. SANGER, JR.

### I

#### TO THE CHAMPAGNE

FROM different colleges and states, and not as a unit, came the twenty-three men who were to form Section Twenty-Seven. Most of them sailed together from New York, on May 5, 1917, on the *Espagne*, and, June 9, left Paris for the front in a long convoy. Proceeding through Châlons-sur-Marne, we arrived without incident at the little village of Billy-le-Grand, where the Section considered itself fortunate, not because we were in this

muddy and dusty village in which the cars were parked, but that being there meant work after the idleness and delay in Paris. The morning after arriving, ten cars went into active service, taking over from a French section the *postes* at La Plaine, Esplanade, and Prosnes, and entering upon hospital evacuation work, first from Villers-Marmery, and then from Mont-de-Billy.

The sector was all that could be desired as far as activity was concerned, for the 132d Division, to which Twenty-Seven was attached, was engaged in driving the enemy from the crest of Mont Cornillet, the only one of the famous Champagne hills on which he still retained a foothold after the April-May offensive.

The Section plunged right into the work, and before a week was over the number of cars on duty rose to eighteen. Thus, in our first period of active service, we were able to see and go through all that any section could reasonably desire; in a word experiencing everything — *arrivées* and *départs*, night driving without lights over unknown roads, without maps and only verbal directions as to how to find the *postes*, and steady rolling, night and day, over shelled highways with but an occasional respite, owing to the volume of the work.

From the first, Esplanade, situated in woods filled with French artillery, was the worst *poste*. In the process of searching out and trying to *strafe* the surrounding batteries, the ambulances suffered, and Lars Potter's car was wrecked. Happily, however, the shells came in just before the car was loaded and no one was hurt. This good luck clung to the Section throughout its six months' existence, saving the drivers often by a matter of minutes or yards.

At this time the *poilus*, while undoubtedly weary of the war — as indeed who could help being after three years in the trenches? — nevertheless showed no sign of yielding. With America in the struggle, they felt confident of the final outcome; so the arrival of our troops was the subject of constant questioning.



## SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

---

### THE COURAGE OF THE WOUNDED

THE courage of the wounded also early attracted our attention and won our admiration; for they scarcely ever permitted even a murmur to escape their lips, despite unavoidable jolting over rough roads or through shell-holes; and their sincere appreciation of what we American volunteers were doing more than compensated us for any hardships and dangers connected with the work.

The German wounded carried after the successful French attack of June 21 showed a surprising ignorance of what was happening in the outside world and did not even know that the United States had declared war.

On the days off duty the Aisne-Marne canal formed a welcome retreat. Indeed, had it not been for its cool seclusion and quiet where the danger, dust, and strain of the front seemed so far away as almost to be forgotten, those first two weeks when heavy rolling and little sleep were added to the newness of it all, would have been far harder to bear.

### REPOS AT BREUVERY

TOWARD the end of June, again in a long, dusty convoy, but feeling quite a different section from the one which had arrived from Paris such a short time before, Number Twenty-Seven went back *en repos* to Breuvery, a village south of Châlons, where we enjoyed a delightful cantonment with grass, trees, a fair-sized stream, and an adjoining field for baseball. This pleasure was destined to be short-lived, however, for scarlet fever broke out and we left the village for Fontaine-sur-Coole, where two tents were set up, one serving as dining-room and the other as sleeping-quarters, although many of us still preferred to sleep on stretchers in our cars.

Except for the evacuation of the sick from near-by villages to Châlons, the men could now spend their time practically as they pleased. Bathing in an ice-cold spring, though rather a shock to the system, was fairly

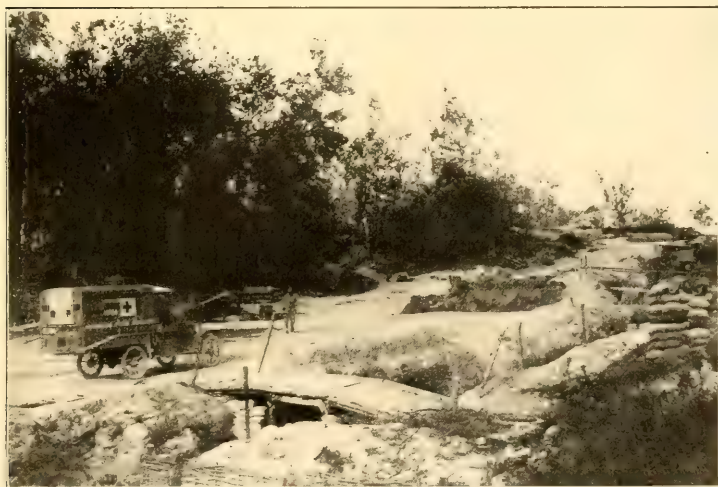
popular and rather interested the village children, who were always attracted to "*les américains*." It was the height of the cherry season, and roads lined with heavily laden trees whose owners had not the time to pick the fruit, also gave us much delight. In the evenings baseball furnished the chief diversion, and drew quite a number of spectators, for the game was new to the French. What might otherwise have been monotony in such a life was relieved by a special forty-eight-hour *permission* to Paris, granted through the courtesy of the French Army in honor of the Fourth of July. All but a few, who had to remain for sick evacuation, were thus permitted to see the magnificent welcome accorded at the Capital to the first contingent of the American Expeditionary Force and on returning were able to answer at least one of the questions so constantly asked by French officers, soldiers, and civilians — "When are the American troops coming?" Those of us who had been unable to enjoy the Fourth in Paris had their leave ten days later on the French national holiday, when the occasion was marked by a special dinner at camp, and by shows and concerts.

### BACK TO THE CHALK HILLS AND PINES — MOURMELON

FINALLY our sojourn at Fontaine-sur-Coole came to an end, when to the general disappointment the Section went neither to Verdun, the Vosges, nor Alsace, as rumor said would be the case, but back to the country of chalk hills and pines, of choking dust or clinging mud — the Champagne. However, a pleasant feature of the situation was that after a few days in a slaughter-house, Twenty-Seven moved into fine brick barracks in Mourmelon-le-Grand, where the cars continued to run to Prosnes and through it to all the forward *postes* — Ferme de Constantine, Ferme de Moscou, and Ludwigshafen. The road to the last-mentioned was in such full view of the German *saucisses*, constantly up on the other side of the Cham-



POSTE M-4, DRESSING-STATION AND "CAVES" BEFORE MOURMELON  
CHAMPAGNE



GENERAL VIEW OF THE FERME DE MOSCOU "POSTE DE SECOURS"



## SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

---

pagne hills, that its use by vehicles was permitted only at night.

The first day of our sojourn at Mourmelon-le-Grand, the Germans went out of their way to give Section Twenty-Seven a warm welcome. In relieving the ambulance at Constantine, two Fords were out in full view, waiting until one of them could go into the trench dug by the English drivers to conceal and protect their cars, and the other proceed to Moscou. In those few minutes, the Germans sent in four shells, all of which came within fifteen yards of the cars and their drivers, enveloping them in smoke and showering earth on them. But by a miracle no one was wounded. There was nothing else at which to fire within a half-mile radius, and as the red crosses on a white background precluded any possibility of a mistake as to the character of the cars, the act was but another example of German contempt for international agreements in time of war. The car that went to Ludwigs-hafen that night had also a rather bad time, for it was caught in the relief going up and the road began to be shelled.

During nearly two months in this sector, Sapinière was the *poste central* where cars waited their turn to go forward; but unlike La Plaine, it was but once molested by *arrivées*. It was an excellent place from which to watch both German and French aeroplanes, when one could see the sky dotted all over with white and black puffs from anti-aircraft guns, and occasionally witness an air duel or the attacking of an observation balloon. And an old artillery observation post, built in some trees, commanded a view of the whole of the hill region, on which the Germans often laid *barrages*, terrible yet fascinating to behold. At night star-shells, signal rockets, and flashes from guns illuminated the scene in a way that one who has seen it can never forget.

On the whole the new sector was far quieter than the former one, but it had its bad times, too. Between nine and four one night nearly a hundred wounded had to be



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

evacuated over a *piste* from Ludwigshafen, because the explosion of an ammunition train at Prosnes, always a shelled corner, had completely blocked the regular road. On another occasion shells wrought havoc in a battalion just descending from the trenches when, of the three men who went out over the badly torn-up *piste* to bring in those who were not beyond help, two were mentioned and later received the *Croix de Guerre* for their work. Five drivers in all were so honored, before the Section, with half of its cars now bearing marks of the front, once more went back *en repos* with the Division, this time to La Chaussée-sur-Marne.

The incessant rain and cold which marked October made the old doorless, windowless mill, in which Twenty-Seven was billeted at La Chaussée-sur-Marne, anything but pleasant, so word that the Division was going back into line came as a relief.

The taking over of the ambulance sections with the French by the U. S. Army had now begun, and an officer came to La Chaussée to secure a list of those who would sign on for the new régime. A grand farewell party was held the evening before going back to active work for the last ten days — to the Aubérive-Souain front, which was quiet; with its six forward *postes*, calling for ten cars at Bussy-le-Château in case of a gas attack, and its evacuation work from Suippes and Cuperly. The whole Section was thus nominally on duty.

Those of us who reënlisted were transferred to Section Eight, and the enlisted personnel of old Field Service Section Seventy-Two was sent out to take over Twenty-Seven's cars, but as this did not occur until November 4, we had the distinction of being the last of the old American Field Service Sections to give up volunteer work.

HOWARD RADCLIFFE COAN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Williams, '20; served with Section Twenty-Seven in the Field Service; later a driver for the Y.M.C.A.

## II

### IN THE RÉGION DES MONTS

*Région des Monts, Champagne*

*Friday, June 15*

TUESDAY afternoon, while I was trying to write in the terrible heat, Lars came along with three sailors and asked whether I wanted to go for a walk to see their guns. I accepted readily and a half-hour's walk brought us to the Aisne-Marne Canal where are some inland gunboats. They showed us all over them and then we went in swimming. You can't imagine how delicious that swim was. While we were still in, the sailors told us their Commandant was there. Accordingly we met him in our borrowed trunks, and he immediately invited us to tea aboard the "L." He is married to an American and speaks English well. We had a most pleasant tea with M. Caumartin, and on leaving he presented us with some shell fuses and "New York Tribunes," both equally welcome and deadly. He also insisted that we come and see him again, and we shall be nothing loath. Down there the war seemed so far away, a peaceful canal with the guns seldom audible. It is certainly most weird in a thunder storm to hear the cannon and thunder echoing each other alternately.

*At the poste central, La Plaine*

*Sunday, June 17*

I HAVE kept this letter so as to be able to tell you a little of actual work at the front — the previous part of the letter was too dull to send. Provided my state of mind will permit my writing intelligibly, the interest should not be lacking now. We arrived about eight-thirty with both the French batteries, with which all three *postes* are literally surrounded, and the Germans going full tilt. I never before in my life knew what real fear was. Unless one has been there, one cannot in any way appreciate

the sensation. The only way that one can distinguish the *arrivées* and *départs* is that the former whistle, then explode; the latter give the explosion of the gun, and then whistle. Both are the same in meaning terrible destruction, but only the former for us. Although the latter are harmless for us, I could n't keep from instinctively flinching every time a battery went off. They were worse than any Fourth of July celebration I have ever heard, and the strain of listening to every whine and explosion was something awful. Incidentally we learned what kind of business they meant. Wheeler took us to one of the *postes* to learn the road. While cranking to come back we had to drop flat twice while the *éclats* rattled down through the trees around us, and on the road we slowed up while they pattered down in front of us. Even back here, a three-inch piece missed the cook by just a yard. I can certainly sympathize with the ostrich, for somehow it gave a feeling of safety to be under the covering of the car, with only the top over me. And yet this was as dangerous a place as any because there was no chance to watch for and dodge pieces coming down. One comfort, however, was that I could hear most of them from an *abri*, for I have n't had a call all day — and it is now almost four.

*Later*

I HAD to go over to one of the batteries to get a man hit in the shoulder. He is another I shall never forget, for his wound was from one of these wicked things that have been whistling all day, and that made it come near. Those I have taken from hospital to hospital have n't been so fresh from the effects of the wounds, and their bandages a little older, and more a matter of course. I am now a little more used to the French guns, and the whistling of the *arrivées* is n't so bad unless they get too near. I am expecting a call almost any time now. The men out here are a wonderful lot, the doctors, *brancardiers*, and cooks. They are not hardened by it at all, after three years; every victim that comes causes the same amount of

interest and sympathy. But oh! they are all so tired and sick of it all — three long dreary years, and all the fighting on French soil. It is n't the thought so much of themselves that is uppermost but *la pauvre France*.

## FOR A FEW HUNDRED METRES OF TRENCH

*Tuesday, June 19*

BY noon we had eight instead of the usually five cars working, and we were busy too — the price of the four hundred metres of trenches. The extent of human endurance never ceases to amaze me. The wounded never have any anæsthetic or hypodermic unless they require an operation to extract a piece of metal, or to amputate or enlarge the wound to prevent infection; and they have to undergo at least two or three dressings before they reach a permanent hospital. A man with half the face shot away, with a leg, arms, and hand wounded, often rides as an *assis*. One chipper little fellow beside me had a rifle ball through his neck; I have had to carry for half an hour over these rough roads a *couché*, with an unset compound fracture of the leg, with stomach, arm, and leg wounds, most of them bleeding into the car, and never did a murmur or groan escape his lips. Such fortitude is unbelievable unless one sees it himself. But the most pitiful men I carried, of the forty rescued in a day and a half, from midnight Sunday until ten Tuesday morning, were those who had been buried by shells. Those I carried acted queerly, but I did not know what was wrong until they started to walk into the hospital. They reeled like drunken men and did not take interest in anything. You could snap your fingers in their faces and there was no reaction. They may regain their minds in the course of two months, perhaps never.

We had a good many Germans, and it is another revelation of the superb qualities of the French at the front to see how the Fritzes are treated. Until wounded or captured they are Boches; afterwards, they are merely prisoners. I tried to brush up my German on the *assis* I car-



ried, but after five weeks of French it was hard to go back. All are so young — many boys of seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen — and so sick of it all and glad to be out of it. Yet their discipline of fear controls them as a lion-trainer controls the beast. The latter does not dare use his superior strength except occasionally to resent what he hates to do. One, however, in whose questioning I acted as interpreter, said that in his regiment the soldiers were so angry at their officers for loafing in the rear that they had thrown grenades into their *abris*. It may not be true, and yet it is an indication.

Some of the poor fellows had been in the trenches two, others five hours when wounded. And hungry — they had had no food for two days, no drink for five days, and they had no trenches, just shell-holes. That fact nearly cost us a whole company of men — for the French advanced nearly four hundred metres too far, expecting to find trenches, before they realized they had already passed the German lines.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE EXPERIENCE

IN the course of one of my trips I investigated the road I had gone over the night before. Aside from the fact that it is terribly shelled several times every day, I don't see how I ever got through it without smashing my car. Honestly, the shell-holes I straddled, the coils of barbed wire I must have wound my way through, the bridge I crossed — I shudder yet to think of it all. For, of course, we drive alone, and there is no communication by telephone between *postes*. Suppose I had been hit — I could have rotted there before I should have been found, as no one traversed that road. The fact that I took an hour and a half instead of ten minutes to come out caused no one any anxiety. With two men to a car, aside from the tremendous comfort of company, there would be much less danger of being stranded somewhere. We are alone and only one who has done it, in the middle of the night, in the rain, on unknown, shell-filled roads,



## SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

---

can appreciate the terrible loneliness of it all. Wheeler says he has never seen *postes* situated as these — surrounded by batteries and also without telephonic connections for the tracing up of cars.

Between midnight Sunday and 10 A.M. Tuesday, today — not quite a day and a half — I carried 39 wounded in my car. About 175 passed through the *poste* in that same time, and after about noon Monday we had extra cars out here and also at the hospital.

### “ONE OF OUR MACHINES DID NOT RETURN”

August 10, 1917

FRIDAY I was out driving again. It was a wonderfully clear day, perfect for aeroplanes and photography. It was so clear, and so many German *saucisses* were up, that I waited outside of the ruined village, not daring to go to No. 1 until the car there came out. I was not going to give them another chance at more than one car there, not after that first Sunday. Except for the hum of motors and the occasional pop-pop of the *mitrailleuses*, nothing happened until ten-thirty, then I was an unwilling witness of one of the most terrible things I have yet seen. *Mitrailleuses* were particularly persistent, and George and I went out, just in time to see the end of a fight. A big Farman started falling, falling from a tremendous height, almost above us. First it started gliding fairly slowly, and not until its first drop did we see the ill-betiding smoke and a little flame. Either by skill or accident, it came into a spiral and fell quite a distance, but the flames were gaining. The *mitrailleuse* was going, and a second time it got into a perfect spiral. That fooled us and we waited with bated breath, cheering or groaning as the battle to land seemed a winning or losing one. A third straight drop and the ground did not seem so far away. Again it glided, but just as we lost sight of it behind the tree-tops, it turned clear over. Then a tremendous volume of smoke poured up. Did they make it or not? That was what we were asking. Then I remembered

that when the machine was still very high up, I had seen objects pitching out. I had no glass to see what they were. When it was down, one realized that it could only have been one thing, men, and there had been three. And we had seen them die, powerless to do anything. We could not understand why the men should have jumped, unless because of the heat, yet the machine had appeared to be under control until then. Later I found out.

### WAITING GRAVES — THE CROSSES

JUST outside the village we pass on the way to the hospital, I overtook our photographing friend, M. Bardiellini, and took him in. He was out hunting for the place of the aeroplane's fall, as it is only the third that has fallen anywhere near here since the war began. I asked if I could go along, and having pretty good information as to its whereabouts, we struck off from the *postes centrals*. We passed the cemetery — I say *the* because it is the largest in the neighborhood — smaller, isolated ones are never out of sight. Even worse than the regular rows of crosses, with the monotonous "*Mort pour la France*," were the waiting open graves.

Neither of us was feeling very bright or happy, as we crossed open stretches and skirted woods down whose regular avenues we could see the chalk of the much-contested range. Shells were coming in to the left regularly, but far away. After a hot walk of over a mile, through stretches peppered with shell-holes and strewn with pieces of shell, we came upon the wreck of the plane, still smoking. It was upside down, the left wing almost intact, the right and most of the rest of it twisted and broken. Despite the two guards, we got some pictures that ought to be good, and started back. We fell in with some artillerymen who showed us where the three unfortunates had fallen. They were fully five hundred yards from their machine, and we realized that the heat had killed them or had forced them to kill themselves by jumping. I found the machine-gun cylinder with every cartridge exploded.

## SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN

---

That was what we had taken for the *mitrailleuse* being fired. A few pieces of burned coat and a pair of shoes showed where the *mitrailleur* had been. A captain and two lieutenants had suffered that terrible fate. The unhappy Farman's compass, a few rods from the spot, is a good remembrance of the catastrophe. We were feeling more depressed than ever, but in the evening when we saw a German *saucisse* burning, the fourth during the day, we realized that the French had secured pretty good revenge, especially as they also bagged a German plane that fell one hundred yards this side of the French first line.

HOWARD RADCLIFFE COAN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are selections from home letters.



### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY AS A UNIT OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION TWENTY-SEVEN, reorganized as Section Six-Thirty-Nine, served in Champagne, in the Suippes sector, with the 132d French Division from November, 1917, to March, 1918. In March it moved up, after the drive on Amiens, to the Somme-Oise front, being stationed at Gournay-sur-Arronde. It remained here until May, when it moved into the Montdidier sector, near Montigny and Ravenel. On July 18 it went to Bresles *en repos*. From the latter part of July until August 18 it worked in the Marne-Château-Thierry sectors — Orbais, Chavenay, and Dormans. It was serving here with the 18th Division.

Leaving this front on August 18, it went to the Verdun sector, at Béveaux. On September 18 it moved again, this time to Camp Fréty, on reserve with the American army. From the latter part of September until just before the Armistice it took part in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, working near Séchaut and Monthois. It was in Nancy when the Armistice was declared. Then followed the trip with the Army of Occupation, through Alsace, Lorraine, and into Baden into the neutral zone. The towns visited were Saverne, Morzheim, Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein, and Mannheim. Then followed the trip to Base Camp. The Section received a sectional citation during the Second Battle of the Marne, in the orders of the 18th French Division.

COLEMAN G. CLARK <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Chicago, Illinois; University of Chicago, '18; served with Section Seventy-Two of the Field Service and subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

## *Section Twenty-Eight*

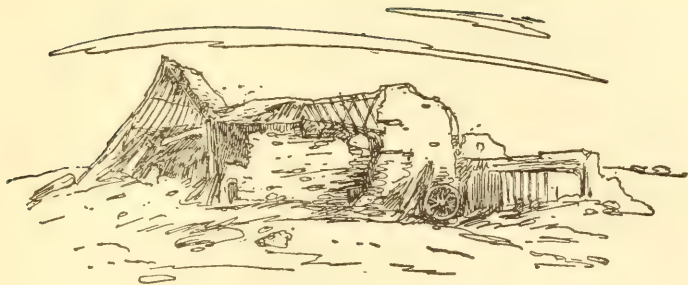
THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. FREDERIC R. COLIE
- II. JOHN BROWNING HURLBUT
- III. STANLEY HILL
- IV. CONVERSE HILL



## SUMMARY

SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT left Paris June 17, 1917, arriving at Mourmelon-le-Grand, in Champagne, in the sector of the Monts, June 19. It served with its division in line there until relieved in the fall. The *postes* along the Voie Romaine and out towards Mont Sans Nom and Mont Haut, were Ham, Bois Sacré, M Quatre, and Village Gascon. In mid-September the Section moved to Damery, where it was enlisted in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service as Section Six-Forty.



## *Section Twenty-Eight*

He died in the winter dark, alone,  
In a stinking ambulance,  
With God knows what upon his lips —  
But on his heart was France!

EMERY POTTLE

### I

#### DEPARTING IN A CLOUD OF DUST

*June 18, 1917*

FINAL preparations were made day before yesterday, and yesterday we were up early in order to take a final look at our cars before they were lined up for inspection by Mr. Andrew and some of General Pershing's staff. There are sixteen Dartmouth men in the Section, who are all absolutely inexperienced as far as work at the front is concerned; but our *Chef*, W. H. Wallace, Jr., has been at the front with Section Four and understands the game from A to Z.

All day long we rode through clouds of dust, past isolated farms, between green fields of neatly laid-out vineyards and waving wheat, and in and out of quaint little villages whose inhabitants stared and waved cheerily as the convoy swept by. Here and there, in the midst of a meadow crimson-spotted by poppies, we noticed small wooden crosses, which marked the graves of those brave men who died in the fierce battle of the Marne. At dusk, we drew up in a small village where we were to spend the night and were drummed to sleep by the distant mutter of the guns.

### MOURMELON-LE-GRAND

June 20

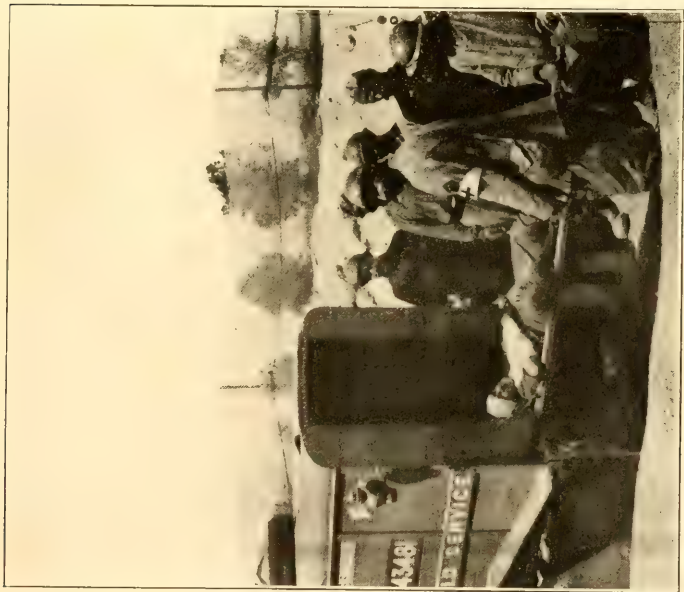
LAST evening we pulled up before one of the long series of brick barracks at Mourmelon-le-Grand which is to be our cantonment. It lies about seven miles behind a row of six hills that dominate the surrounding country, which, we learn, has been the scene of sanguinary fighting since the day when the forces of Attila were defeated on the plains of Châlons. In itself the village has no particular attractions other than an excellent *buvette* and a chocolate shop. In times of peace this was one of the largest training-camps for the French Army, and in the main the town is composed of row upon row of long brick barracks laid out with streets between, with adjoining it a large plain cut by a system of trenches and dugouts. Fortunately for us, there remains plenty of room for a baseball diamond where Strubing and Hasbrook pursue elusive "flies" to the infinite delight of an admiring horde of *poilus*.

### VILLAGE GASCON — M QUATRE — BOIS SACRÉ

June 22

FROM the foot of the hills to Mourmelon a level plateau extends bare and unsmiling except for clumps of dwarf pine, the only form of plant life that can get sufficient nourishment from the chalky soil. A shell breaking on this ground leaves a round, vicious-looking white scar; and the *ensemble* of many shells produces a bizarre Swiss-cheese effect.

Out past demolished Baconnes is a *poste de secours*, M 4, situated just at a crossroad, which has received, now and again, and twice between times, noisy remembrances in the form of "155's," which besides making the *poste* unhealthy, keep us tied close to the door of our dugout. Here we have four cars. Once having run through the woods, a veritable nest of guns, we come upon a little clearing among the pines, on which opens a trench



LOADING A "COUCHE" AT CONSTANTINE



GAS ON THE ROAD!





## SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

---

which is our *poste*, Bois Sacré. Out ahead is an open field, cut by what remains of a national highway and pock-marked by shell-holes of every known calibre. Still farther ahead, in what remains of the Hun fortifications, are three regimental *postes* fed by a car stationed at Village Gascon. Village Gascon, by the way, is not a village at all, but a jumbled collection of small ramshackle wooden barracks, interspersed with dugouts and battery emplacements. All this is hidden in a small grove of scrub pines with little paths running here and there, and now and then an abandoned trench. The only thing in common this place has with a village is a little rude chapel near one end of the grove, built entirely of rough boards and pine branches, and marked by a large wooden cross before the gate. The cross is distinctive in that it is the one used by the Greek Church and not the simple cross of a single bar with which we are familiar. This sector was recently occupied by some Russian troops detailed for service on the French front; hence the insignia of the Greek Church. In fact, there are many Russians buried in the little cemetery in front of the chapel and their graves are easily distinguished from those of their French allies by the queer crosses which mark them.

### PAUL OSBORN KILLED

TOWARD the latter part of this afternoon, the Germans dropped a heavy *barrage* upon the line of hills mentioned above, and the scarred slopes of Cornillet shone bare and forbidding in the sinking sun. Before dusk they were hidden under a dense cloud of smoke and dust that rolled down the sides, wave upon wave, choked up the valley, and spread over the woods in a veil. To the right, Monts Blanc and Sans Nom were smoking like volcanoes, and everywhere, for miles behind the lines, jets of earth and smoke spurted up, spread and added to the general haze, while the roads and battery positions were shelled. By nine o'clock the infantry attacked, and then the  *blessés*

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

came pouring into the *postes*. It was pitch dark in the woods. The roads were new and strange. The shelling was intense. Peltier, surrounded by batteries and swamped under a rain of shells, was the centre of activity. One car, driven by Allison, with Milne as orderly, ended up in a shell-hole and four men went to their rescue. After getting the car out, they started back, and just as they got abreast of their cars, two shells dropped but a few metres away, when Paul Osborn<sup>1</sup> was wounded in the back and right leg and his car perforated again and again by the *éclats*. The motor still ran, so with Noyes driving, Wells pouring water into the damaged radiator and Hurlbut running ahead to warn them against holes, they took him into Village Gascon where his wounds were dressed before he was taken back to Farman. Milne, too, was slightly scratched in the shoulder by a shrapnel ball. Toward morning things quieted down and we learned that the Boche attack had failed completely.

June 27

PAUL OSBORN died last night despite every attempt to save his life. The wound in his back sapped his strength so that he was unable to withstand the strain of having his leg amputated. The funeral service was held in the chapel of the hospital, and then the body was borne by six French soldiers to the little cemetery on the slope of the hill. The flags of France and America were draped upon the casket and the *Croix de Guerre* pinned upon the folds by General Baratier, of Fachoda fame, who delivered a touching address at the grave-side.

## THE FOURTH OF JULY

July 4

ALL day mysterious preparations have been going on in the mess hall and there is an undue amount of whisper-

<sup>1</sup> Paul Gannett Osborn, of Montclair, New Jersey; Dartmouth, '17; served with Section Twenty-Eight in the Field Service in 1917; died of wounds June 27, 1917.

## SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

---

ing among our French personnel. At six o'clock we were informed that dinner was ready and when we walked into the room we had the explanation of this mystery and whispering. The walls and rafters were swathed in greens of every description, while at one end a large American flag was draped, and from the smoky beams the banners of the Allied nations waved. Of the dinner itself, one cannot say enough in praise. During the interim between the last course and the wines, we were given a concert by the 63d Regiment Band, which played first the "Star-Spangled Banner" and then the "*Marseillaise*."

### ASHTON AND ISBELL WOUNDED

July 15

GERMAN planes came over day before yesterday in the afternoon and dropped circulars informing us that the following night we, with several other neighboring villages, were to be the recipients of some *Kultur* in the form of bombs. In fact, last evening they attacked Mont Sans Nom, but were repulsed, though they shelled the batteries and roads heavily. Rain set in, however, and called a halt to the aerial part of their programme; but it also made it hard evacuating the *blessés*. The roads were jammed with munition trains going up and *ravitaillement* trains coming back. In the woods behind Gascon the situation was especially difficult. On one trip Ashton, acting as Strubing's orderly, had to sit out on the fender and shout directions to the driver. Several shells fell close to them, and one wounded Ashton severely in the shoulder and foot, an *éclat* breaking the collar bone and just missing the spine as it came out of his back. He was evacuated to Farman and a part of the foot amputated.

July 28

OUT at Gascon the rats are terrible. Yesterday at midnight they held a field day on the corrugated iron roof of our dugout. The strange part of the whole performance

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

is that these rats do not run, but gallop. At 2 A.M. each and every morning they hold a steeplechase, and between their squealing and our cursing this is a poor place for a rest cure.

Late this evening Isbell and Adams took a call to a battery near here that was being shelled rather heavily. One *obus* exploded very near and Isbell was given a deep flesh wound in the foot.

August 25

CHIEF WALLACE has been cited to the order of the Division for the *Croix de Guerre*, and this morning we all lined up and, looking as military as possible, spent a nervous quarter of an hour while General Baratier complimented Wallace upon "the splendid work that he and his men had done in the past few months." We are soon to lose him, as he has accepted a commission in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps.

September 9

ARCHIE GILE came out to the Section to-day to replace Mr. Wallace. He came over on the boat with the rest of the Dartmouth men, but went into the Motor Transport Service, then to Meaux, whence he was sent to us.

September 17

CAPTAIN TUCKER and Lieutenant Webster came out in the afternoon and gave us a talk on why we should become soldiers. We were assured that it is but a matter of a few months before we shall be promoted. Eleven of us followed their advice. But the memory will stick fast of the good old care-free days in S.S.U. Twenty-Eight and the American Field Service.

FREDERIC R. COLIE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of East Orange, New Jersey; Dartmouth, '18; served in the Vosges Detachment as well as in Section Twenty-Eight; later a private in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are extracts from a diary.

## II

### LIFE AT MOURMELON

*Mourmelon-le-Grand, June 20*

ADJOINING our cantonment here is a large network of trenches to be used in case of a retreat. I was out walking around them this afternoon watching the aeroplanes. The air was just alive with them, and it was interesting to watch the German anti-aircraft shells burst around them. One German plane came over and was fired upon by the French anti-aircraft guns. Soldiers working on barbed-wire entanglements around the trenches ran for the dug-outs, and since I was in the centre of the field I decided it was time to run also. Several of the barracks here have been demolished by shells. In the rear of us, just twenty yards away, is one building all blown to pieces, and part of the roof of our own barracks has been torn off.

### DUTY AT M QUATRE

*June 21*

THIS afternoon I was assigned duty as orderly at M Quatre, a *poste* just across the valley from Mont Cornillet. On this high hill are the first-line trenches, the French holding this side and the Germans the other. The hill — once wooded — is now bare, and, viewed through glasses, looks very much like a sieve, due to the shell-holes which are so numerous that they overlap each other. Around M Quatre are four batteries, the *soixante-quinzes* being nearest to us. Shells fall around us practically all the time, and in consequence we remain in our dugout nearly always. It is almost impossible to picture the fighting going on here. Over the few square miles of ground in front of us fountains of earth and stones are thrown up by shells continuously. About five-thirty our supper was brought out to us and it was a fine meal. At this time the firing let up a little and only stray shots were heard. But



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

along toward seven o'clock the bombardment opened up violently again, and the calls for cars came in rapidly, making it necessary to send for more. The sights out on Mont Cornillet were spectacular. Illuminating bombs, colored fire, flaming cannon, all added to the effect, until, at about ten o'clock, the shells were dropping so fast that it was impossible to stay above ground.

PAUL OSBORN

June 22

AT about two o'clock this morning a guard called for "*Encore deux voitures pour le poste Peltier.*" I went as orderly for Wells, and as neither of us was acquainted with the road, Noyes, our acting *Chef* in the absence of Wallace, went with us. Paul Osborn and Orr followed us in another car. I never had even dreamed before just what war really is. I can't begin to describe our ride down through to the *poste*. Even Noyes lost the road, and before we knew it we were out near the trenches, where shells were falling heavily. As we could not use lights, and as it was as dark as pitch, it was almost impossible to see anything except when an illuminating bomb lighted up the barren place. Consequently, I being orderly went ahead to "feel out" the shell-holes. After pushing our cars out of the mud several times, we got back on the right track. Soon we came to a car piled with *blessés* and stuck in the mud. We stopped to help them out of a shell-hole. The shrapnel and bombs were falling thick around us and we were continually receiving torrents of mud and clay which were thrown up. After getting this car off, we started for our own cars.

Just as we were running back a *cent-cinquante-cinq* struck about two metres from one car and at the same time another six or eight metres on the other side. We were all stunned. Suddenly I heard a moan, and then Paul Osborn cry from under the car, "Hospital, quick!" I did not realize anything at first, but soon came to my senses. He had heard the whistling shell approach and had

## SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

---

dodged under the car, as he had one minute before said he intended doing. In this case it was the worst thing he could have done. We picked him up, and although it was pitch dark we were able to see by the light of the bursting shells that he was bleeding in the back profusely. As quickly and *doucement* as possible we put him in the car on a stretcher and started at once for the Village Gascon emergency hospital. Noyes drove the car, Orr remained inside with Paul, Wells sat on the fender feeding the radiator water, it being in a very leaky condition, and I ran on ahead watching the road.

Arriving at the hospital, Paul was placed on a *brancard* and his wounds were dressed. He was terribly hurt, having two large holes the size of one's fist in the back of his right leg, and another was bored through his back and into his lung. We were all very much alarmed, and when the priest asked us whether he was a Catholic or Protestant, we became more so. Finally, when the priest took me aside and said, "*Perdu*," I could hardly hold myself together, for it did not seem possible that the fellow who, a little while ago, was taking a cat-nap in the dugout in the same blanket with me, was now almost dead.

Wells and I were given some hot coffee, and the firing having stopped somewhat, we went out to look over the car, which we found to be in worse condition than we had thought, although, strangely, the engine was all O.K. In all, the car was shattered with eighty-five holes, quarter-inch steel was cut through, and the side was like a porous plaster. Some cuts were as clean as if made by a saw, while others were jagged. A part of one shell pierced the heavy tool box, went through the pumps and came out the other side of the box, cutting the steel tubing and the steel rods cleanly in half. I never want another such experience as this night.

*Champagne Sector, June 24*

THE shell-fire was heavy last night, when the Germans, a long time getting our range, poured the shells in rather hot and heavy. We went without orderlies for the first

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

time, and it was anything but pleasant. I reached Village Gascon at about 1.45 A.M. and found every one sound asleep amidst the roar outside, and it was very lonesome to sit there with a thousand and one rats squealing. I remained until daybreak and then stepped outside to take a look around. It was very cold, dead men were lying about awaiting burial, earth was thrown up, and at intervals the "75's" poured out their deadly metal. Now and then the "155" battery roared in masterly volubility, and off in the direction of Le Bois Sacré an infantry attack by the French was in progress, the rapid firing of the machine guns making things rather unpleasant.

### GENERAL BARATIER'S ADDRESS

*June 27*

OSBORN's funeral was held this morning at nine-thirty. Section 28 was there in full dress, and also men from Sections 12, 14, 19, and 27. Mr. Andrew arrived from the Field Service Headquarters, bringing Paul's brother, who is in a transport section at Jouaignes. A Protestant chaplain officiated at the ceremony, which took place in front of a curiously painted wooden chapel erected by the Russian troops, who were here last year. Paul's body was sealed in a lead-lined, plain, unvarnished, white-oak casket. Hasbrook and Shoup drove one of the ambulances for a hearse. Interment was in a small cemetery a few hundred yards from the chapel and up on the hill. The floral display was very simple. The French personnel of our Section sent a large pillow of red rambler roses, and our Section gave a spray of lilies. These were all the flowers that could be obtained. Headed by a bearer of the American flag, the procession moved slowly up to the cemetery, where are buried a great many other men who have died for France, and whose graves are marked only by plain gray crosses. The whole ceremony was in French, and was very beautiful, impressive, exceedingly sad, and will be very difficult to forget. General Baratier attended and spoke at the grave as follows:

## SECTION TWENTY-EIGHT

---

In the name of the 134th Division, I salute Soldier Osborn, who came at the outbreak of the war to aid us to triumph for right, liberty, and justice. In his person I salute the Army of the United States which is fighting with us. The same ideal inspires us and leads us onward, for we are both fighting to save the liberty of the world.

Soldier Osborn, my thoughts go out to your parents, who, on the other side of the ocean, will learn of the grief that has stricken them. I know that words have no power to lessen a mother's sorrow, but I know, too, that the ideal which she inspired in the heart of her son will be able, if not to dry her tears, at least to transform them, for it is through these tears, the tears of all mothers, of all women, that victory will come — that victory which shall assure the peace of the world, which will be theirs more than any others' since they will have paid for it with their hearts.

Soldier Osborn, sleep on in the midst of your French comrades fallen, like you, in glory. Sleep on, wrapped in the folds of the American flag, in the shadow of the banner of France.

### AN ATTACK ON THE MOUNTS

*M Quatre, July 6*

ALL was very serene until about 12.15 P.M., when the Boches attacked on Mont Blanc and Mont Cornillet. This was exceptionally fierce and was kept up until nearly four o'clock. The two hills were simply one solid bank of smoke, flame, and geysers of *débris*. Toward midnight I had a call to Village Gascon and one *couché* and one *assis* were brought out to me. The *couché*, who was wounded in the leg and through the back, spoke English quite well, and, although in great pain, managed to talk with me, saying, among other things, "I love the Americans —!"

*July 13*

DURING the air raid in Châlons last night a paper was dropped by an aviator informing "*tout le monde*" that the towns of Châlons, Mourmelon-le-Grand, Mourmelon-le-Petit, Bar-le-Duc, and other places would be bombarded to-morrow night, July 14. The Germans seem to do this once in a while to try and show superiority.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

September 3

Took a walk toward Hexen Weg and looked over the old trenches and ground which was being fought over last April. The whole field was covered with little graves marked by small wooden crosses. Skeletons of soldiers were strewn about and in some cases the uniforms had not started to decay. Now and then we would kick over a shoe with a foot in it. Helmets and weapons were around everywhere.

September 7

THERE was a big review of the 100th Regiment this afternoon. The regiment has just been filled out with a large number of Africans. They appear awkward at times, but on review make a good showing. Their huge "cheese-knives" are the terror of the Germans.

October 13

EVERYONE is packing up preparatory to leaving to-morrow at 3 A.M., for Champigny. It is necessary to leave at this early hour because the road is exposed and unsafe for the convoy to pass by daylight.

Champigny, October 16

THIS sector is a quiet one at present. A few *obus* come in, but not very close. We carry the *blessés* to Châlons-sur-Vesle. It is always very dark by the time we reach Reims and so very difficult getting around. In addition, the streets are full of barbed wire and the main ones barricaded. These barricades are strongly built and are provided with loopholes through which it is possible to shoot.

JOHN BROWNING HURLBUT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Hartford, Connecticut; Dartmouth, '18; served with Section Twenty-eight of the Field Service from its formation and subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are extracts from a diary.





“LA CROIX DE GUERRE FRANÇAISE”



### III

#### MORITURI SALUTAMUS

Wednesday, June 28, 1917

PAUL OSBORN was wounded on last Thursday night, but fought death until his heart failed him yesterday morning. If anything happens to me, I pray God that I may be as noble, as courageous, and as thoughtful of others as Paul was. One of the first things he did in the hospital was to ask for cigarettes — he does not smoke himself — to give to the *blessés* and attendants around him. About the last thing he said was, "I am going to fight this and win out." Then he went to sleep, became unconscious, and died when his heart failed him a half-hour or so later. He never came to consciousness in his last moments; so he passed away just as though he was going to sleep. He did not know that his leg was amputated. His brother, who is in the *Camion* Service, arrived here about two hours after his death. He lost the battle of life, but he did "win out," for he must have won a place of honor in eternal life.

From all this you can realize that we are in a particularly dangerous sector, and you would realize it more vividly if you could go to our *postes* and hear the shells flying. Three more of our autos were badly smashed up yesterday, but we have them all ready for service again. The boys were in the dugouts at the time, so no one was injured; but had they been at the side of their ambulances, it is certain that more would be in the hospital to-day. The boys are all playing as safe as possible when not making a run. Of course, when a call comes for an ambulance, they never flinch; but when we are waiting for a call, we keep within reach of the dugouts. But whatever happens, we are all ready to do our duty and to do our best. . . .

Remember that we are in this war to the finish, and if our hour comes, we are glad to go if in the meantime we

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

have done a noble work. We must all join the fight for humanity and civilization whatever the outcome, and after being here and seeing graveyards with a couple of thousand dead in each one, it seems that one life is a small sacrifice. It is a thousand dying that makes a difference.

STANLEY HILL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Lexington, Massachusetts; Dartmouth, '18; wounded July 15, 1918, at the beginning of the Second Battle of the Marne, while driving a load of *blessés* through a town which was under fire. His skull was fractured by a fragment from a shell and he died August 14, 1918, in the hospital of La Veuve. The above is from an unpublished letter to his father.



## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

S.S.U. TWENTY-EIGHT was taken over by the Government September 17, 1917, at Mourmelon-le-Grand, while it was working with the 134th Division of Infantry, and was called thereafter Section Six-Forty. A week after being militarized we were relieved by S.S.U. Seventeen and went with the 134th to Damery-sur-Marne for a *repos* of three weeks. From Damery we went to Champigny, where we worked the *postes* on the northwest side of Reims and a few call *postes* in other parts of the city. Evacuation work was from Châlons-sur-Vesle to Bouleuse, Jonchery, Sapicourt, and Trigny. The latter part of January we moved into the city proper and had all our *postes* in the city.

About February 1 we went "out" *en repos* to Damery for three weeks, then came back to our old quarters in the city, and at this time we took over all the *postes* in the city, which we worked alone until August 17. After a couple of weeks we moved outside the city limits, where we lived in a candle factory. After the German attacks on March 1 we moved to Sacy, eight kilometres from Reims. Up to this time Reims had been quiet, and with this exception was until the Germans began their destruction in early April. This lasted about ten days, and then things were quiet until the retreat in May from the Aisne. At this time we were very busy and gave considerable help to S.S.A. Twenty on our left, whose division, the 45th Colonials, did excellent work in covering the retreat.

After a couple of days we moved into the woods on the road between Épernay and Reims, near Mont Chenot.

Our Division was in line when the attack of July 15 came, and again we were very busy. August 17 the Section was sent to Nogent-en-Bassigny to join the 91st American Division. In September we went to a position in reserve near Void, where we stayed until the Saint-Mihiel drive was over. From here we went to Parois, where we were when the attack of September 26 commenced. As the attack advanced we had *postes* in Véry, Cheppy, Epinonville, Eclisfontaine. After ten days in action we came down to Revigny where the Division entrained for Belgium, ten cars going by flatcar and ten over the road.

We camped two days in the English dugouts at Ypres, and then had about ten days' rest before the 91st went into action,



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

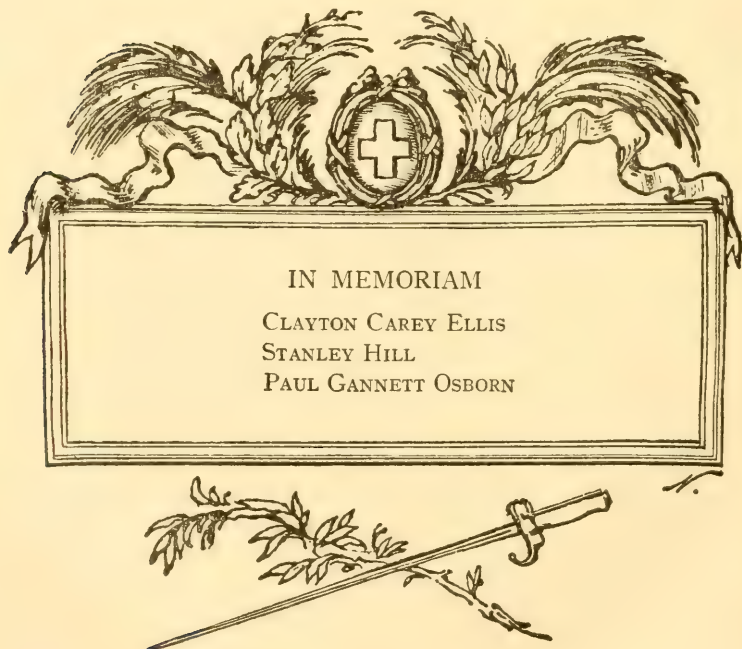
---

October 29. At this time Lieutenant Gile was relieved by Lieutenant Eno. November 4 the 91st received G.M.C.'s and we were sent to Nancy, where we were when the Armistice was signed, Lieutenant Eno now being relieved by Lieutenant Raydon. November 12 we were assigned to the 76th French Division, and started for Germany *via* Metz, Thionville, Sierck, Merzig, Hamburg, Alzey, Biebrich, and ended at Kriftel where we were until relieved March 15.

We received a Section Citation from the 134th D.I. for work in Reims during May and June and a letter of commendation from the Division Surgeon of the 91st.

CONVERSE HILL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Lexington, Massachusetts; Cornell, '17; joined the Field Service in May, 1917; served in Section Twenty-Eight and in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war. Brother of Stanley Hill, who was killed.



*Section Sixty-Four*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. RICHARD WILBUR WESTWOOD

## SUMMARY

ON June 11 Section Sixty-Four left for the training-camp at May-en-Multien. On June 21, it took over a section of French cars at Mouy-Bury and left for Rupt-sur-Moselle, in Lorraine. After a stay there, *en repos*, of almost a month, it was transferred to Rougemont-le-Château, later going on to Vesoul, in the extreme east of France, in the Haute Saône, back of the Alsatian front. After nearly a month of evacuation work here, it convoyed down into Lorraine by way of Contrexéville and Neufchâteau, and finally at Condé-en-Barrois was attached to the 19th Division. On September 12 it went to Glorieux, near Verdun, handling wounded from the *postes* of the Carrière des Anglais, Vacherauville, and La Fourche. On October 2 it was *en repos* at Vanault-les-Dames, near Vitry-le-François, and on the 10th left for Génicourt. There, on October 26, a section of Fords relieved Sixty-Four, its Fiats were turned in to the French *parc*, and the men left to enter other services or be reassigned in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Sixty-Four

You have become a forge of snow-white fire,  
A crucible of molten steel, O France!  
Your sons are stars who cluster to a dawn  
And fade in light for you,  
O glorious France!

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

### I

#### MAY-EN-MULTIEN — FRENCH AMBULANCES

AMONG ourselves, we used to call it the "Flying Sixty-Fourth," not because our cars had wings, but because we once hoped to be one of those mythical sections that hop around from offensive to offensive. In reality, we did not fly much, but we jumped a lot.

But before we can speak of Section Sixty-Four as such, we must make our start from the Yale Campus. Through the coöperation of some Yale men and the *Yale News*, sixty Yale men were enlisted in the American Field Service. They gathered in New York during the week of May 21, and, after some fine hospitality and a send-off from the Yale Club of New York, sailed on May 26.

We all enjoyed the voyage, the novelty of our first view of France, and of course, Paris. After a week of uniform-fittings, sight-seeing, and equipping, some of our unit entered the camion branch of the Service, but forty of us left for the ambulance camp at May-en-Multien, where we were drilled *à la française*. On the evening of June 20 our orders came, and we left the next morning under the leadership of Lloyd Kitchel. The complement

of the Section of forty-five men was filled out with four men from Columbia and one from Syracuse University.

As an introduction to the discomforts of life in the ambulance service, our sojourn at Mouy-Bury boded much. Six days of sleeping in straw on the fourth floor in an old mill, with six hundred *poilus* beneath us; six days of — well, perhaps they were intended as meals; six days of wading in mud — all these bothers were mitigated only by the fact that we had our cars. Here, too, Lieutenant Jacques Dumont and the French personnel joined us, and on June 26 we started off on our first convoy, headed in the general direction of the Vosges.

### ON THE MOSELLE

OUR Jeffery cars, left-overs from a French ambulance section, behaved better than we anticipated, and after five days of a beautiful trip, fifteen of our cars — we felt this a very fair percentage — rolled through the foothills of the Vosges and into Rupt-sur-Moselle, the headquarters of the Automobile Service of the Seventh Army. We celebrated the Fourth here, washed cars often and for no apparent reason, drilled more often, and on July 17 started away to Rougemont-le-Château.

Our arrival in Rougemont promised much, for French anti-aircraft guns were continually putting clouds in the sky in vain attempts to land a Boche. But this town provided only a little more work than Rupt.

Then on July 29 we left for Vesoul, where, on the night of our arrival, we did our first bit of real work by evacuating three hundred *blessés* from the station to the many hospitals of the city. Vesoul was indeed a city, not a town, and our life there was a *permission* with all expenses paid. Here it was that we made our home until August 24, patronizing the *pâtisseries*, the *cinéma*, and the hotel, holding dinner parties at will and writing distress calls to our Paris banks. Here, too, we accumulated a whole new set of Fiats, put them in good shape, and then sat on the front seats awaiting developments.



## SECTION SIXTY-FOUR

---

The developments developed on August 24 and we rolled off in convoy again, by way of Contrexéville and Neufchâteau, to Bar-le-Duc, where we expected to receive orders to go into action. But again we were disappointed.

### VERDUN AT LAST

CONDÉ-EN-BARROIS was our next home, where we were at last attached to a division, and for two weeks we carried *malades* into Bar-le-Duc, watched "Fritz," from our barracks, bomb the city, and asked the Frenchmen when they would leave.

September 12 was a big day in the history of the "Flying Sixty-Fourth," and we were all happy as we dusted along the famous Bar-le-Duc-Verdun road in the direction of Verdun. This was the first time we had ever had a definite objective.

Until the first of October we made up for the time we had lost in the past. We knew shells and shell-holes, we knew dark nights, we knew pursuing *avions* with active machine guns, and we knew days and days of hard action.

From Verdun we went back for a week's *repos* and recuperation at Vanault-les-Dames. Then we moved to the Les Éparges sector, where we waited for another Section to relieve us. On October 24 the relief came and we retired to Bar-le-Duc, where a banquet celebrated the last night of the Section, and the boys separated to seek other fields. After it was all over, there was not a man in the Section who regretted these five months in the Ambulance Service, for though our seemingly endless *repos* was harder than work, we saw some of the beautiful parts of France, and we had done at least a little to help the cause.

RICHARD WILBUR WESTWOOD <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Newton, Massachusetts; Columbia, '19; member of Sections Sixty-Four and Four of the American Field Service; subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service in France.



in the Rock the land of the ...

## *Section Sixty-Five*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. LOUIS G. CALDWELL

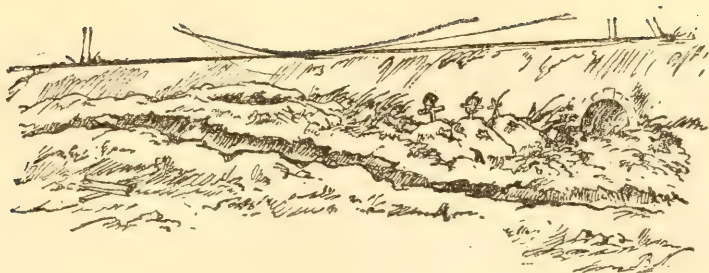
II. RAYMOND W. GAUGER

III. PAUL A. REDMOND

## SUMMARY

SECTION SIXTY-FIVE went from Paris to the training-camp at May-en-Multien in June, 1917. It left there for Courcelles, between Braisne and Fismes, on the Vesle, on July 4, taking over a section of French cars and being attached to the 68th French Division, of the Tenth Army. Its station was Vendresse, about three miles from the Aisne, with halfway stations at Longueval and Cuissy, with Paissy as advanced *poste de secours*, as well as serving at Œuilly by taking *blessés* to points farther in the rear. On July 11 the entire Division moved into line, and the Section was cantoned at Villers-en-Prayères. In addition the Section made call trips to Madagascar Hill, an artillery *poste*, and evacuated from Longueval, Saint-Gilles, Courlandon, Mont Notre Dame, and other hospitals.

Following this it went *en repos* at Bézu-Saint-Germain, and then for a week at Ronchères. On August 20 it returned to the old sector, with the same cantonment and *postes*. It was enlisted in the United States Army on September 8 and subsequently became Section Six-Twenty-Two.



## *Section Sixty-Five*

### I

#### AT THE MILL OF MAY-EN-MULTIEN

THE birth of the soul of Section Sixty-Five was not attended by anything heroic; it sprang into being around a huge manure-pile at the old mill near May-en-Multien. On the morning of June 19, 1917 — and a hot sunny morning it was — two small units of boys from the Middle West were assembled in the corner of the mill-yard, together with three rickety shovels, an old cart, and a mule. The latter had been captured from the Germans, which fact, according to its French owner, explained why it always did the opposite to what it was told; it did not understand the French language. Before the day was over, however, it had had a very good instruction in English and gradually grew to comprehend certain words excellently.

A week before about one hundred and fifty men had been sent out from Paris to form the first contingent at the newly installed camp at the mill and had been separated into four sections of between thirty and forty members each. There was one section composed entirely of Yale men; another of Princeton men; a third of unattached men, called "miscellaneous"; and fourth, our Illinois-Chicago Section, formed from the union of a unit of eighteen men mostly from the University of Illinois and a unit of twelve men who lived in or near Chicago. As this fourth section labored perspiringly on the manure-



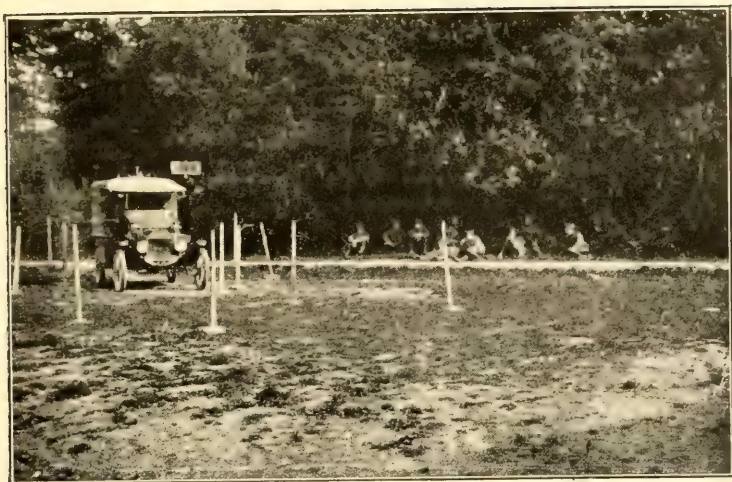
pile, which they were removing, the other three were out on the near-by roads, drilling under the direction of an excitable French *Maréchal des logis*. Occasionally one section would march into the mill yard, execute a French manœuvre with questionable ease, and march out again, at the same time casting a sidelong smile at the section *en repos*. Down near the creek could be faintly heard the stentorian commands of the Yale leader, "*À droite, droite! En avant, marche!*" From amidst a cloud of dust on the road toward the château to the east came the nasal drone of the acting sergeant of the Princeton Section, "*Un, deux, un, deux, un, deux, trois, quatre*" — keeping the tread of his forty men in unison.

The purpose of the camp at the mill was to train the incoming hosts of would-be ambulance drivers to handle cars until such time as ambulances could be supplied for new sections. For this purpose two aged Fords had been supplied, one of which would go and the other of which *could* be started — occasionally. To keep the men occupied, a daily drill was conducted according to the French manual. Every fourth day each section took its turn *en repos*.

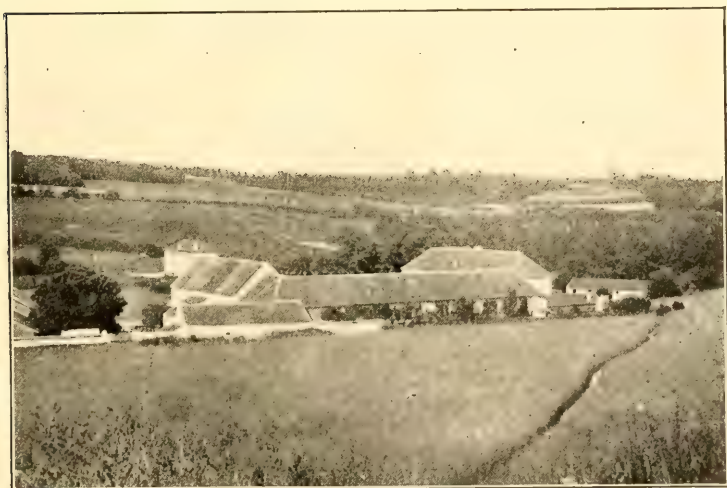
The French drill gave us but one inspiration, the old section song which, though unprintable in parts, nevertheless found its way into the *répertoire* of most sections of the Service. For it was at Courcelles, a later cantonment, that several near-poets evolved the parent chorus from which later sprang a litter of verses, sung to the tune of "Drunk Last Night." The chorus ran as follows:

*"Rassemblement! Garde à vous!*  
*En avant, Marche!* as the Frenchmen do;  
*Un, deux, trois, quatre,*  
 What the hell do you think of that?  
 We never used to do like this before."

On the memorable day of which I speak, the head of the camp, Mr. Fisher, who has been beloved and respected by all who have come under his direction, was absent,



THE FINAL DRIVING TEST — OBSTACLE DODGING



GENERAL VIEW OF THE FARM AT MAY-EN-MULTIEN



## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

and a young graduate from the officers' school at Meaux was temporarily in charge. Anxious to have every one work as hard as the French had made him labor at Meaux, he set our squad *en repos* at the hardest job he could find. This was to transfer the aforesaid manure-pile, the accumulation of countless ages, from its ancient resting-place in the corner of the mill yard, into the near-by fields. Hercules could not have found his task of cleaning the Augean stables any more stupendous. Throughout the whole day and long after the other sections had ceased drilling, the cart was being filled, led away, unloaded, and brought back to be refilled. Finally, late in the afternoon, a merciful rain put an end to further work, but not until pictures of the Illinois-Chicago unit about the manure-pile, with cart and mule, had been taken and labelled, "Friends of France."

### LEAVING MAY-EN-MULTIEN FOR THE FRONT

THAT night, at nine-thirty, the reward came. Rumor had had it that it might be a matter of weeks before ambulances for a new section could be supplied. Now, suddenly, however, the order was received from Paris to send in forty-two men, who were to go out immediately on French cars in a new section. So the Illinois-Chicago group was told to pack up and be ready to leave early in the morning, while twelve men were selected from the "miscellaneous" body to fill out the number. Consequently, at eight o'clock the next day we were assembled and marched to the railway station at Crouy-sur-Ourcq, the first section to graduate from the new camp. Most of us felt a tinge of regret at leaving the old mill; for a more lovely spot could scarcely have been found for an ambulance training-school.

That same night we left Paris for Beauvais and were there conducted to a palatial cantonment in a school-house, where, on the following morning, we were introduced to our cars, twenty huge Berliet ambulances, which had been overhauled and put in excellent condition only

a few days before. A week was spent in becoming acquainted with Berliet idiosyncrasies and in learning to drive in convoy over the hills in the surrounding country. On June 24, our French Lieutenant and *fourrier* arrived — the former a jolly, short, fat individual named Blachot, and the latter a tall, excitable, hot-tempered chap named Floret.

We were now ready to leave for the front. On June 26, Section Sixty-Five became officially a part of the French army, and left Beauvais in convoy for somewhere in the region of Noyon. Twenty ambulances in convoy, at equal distances apart along a poplar-lined country road, is a fine sight, and our first glimpse of ourselves made us feel proud. The ride was one that none of us will ever forget. The *coquelicots* — the French poppies — were in bloom everywhere and spotted the fields with a brilliant crimson, while yellow and blue flowers varied the color scheme, so that in whatever direction one looked, the eye was met by a mass of color. We passed village after village, each with its little church and cluster of white dwellings with red-tiled roofs, then out again on the roads lined with stately trees. Now for the first time most of us began to realize how charming a country is France.

### NOYON — THE CHEMIN DES DAMES

IN the afternoon signs of the devastation of war began to appear. First came a line of trenches, with a maze of barbed wire before them, stretching away from either side of the road. Each hamlet we passed through had more of its dwellings in ruins and fewer inhabitants than the last, until finally the once beautiful town of Lassigny presented a picture of almost absolute desolation. Its large church was only a white ruin, little more than a pile of stones, and the only human beings to be seen were a few German prisoners and their guards, working over the *débris* of once happy homes. Surrounding the town the country was honeycombed with trenches running in every direction, amidst a vast tangle of barbed wire. On



## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

one slope across a valley from us the trenches made a web of white lines, diverging and intersecting, the white appearance being due to the white sand and stone which had been dug up in their construction. Shell-holes, *abris*, remains of log roads and miniature railways were everywhere. The trees, badly damaged or stripped of foliage and branches, stood up like huge skeletons. For a long stretch there were no trees at all, and, needless to say, not a sign of a dwelling. We were passing over the scene of the famous Hindenburg strategic retreat of March, 1917. Yet it was not an ugly sight, for everywhere, over the trenches and amidst the barbed wire, was a crimson mass of *coquelicots*.

We passed a week in the region of Noyon, at the little hamlets of Passéi and Le Mesnil, and on July 2 we went to Courcelles, in a sector of the Chemin des Dames, where we were given a fine cantonment, an entire barrack, which we found highly satisfactory. We were about seven and a half miles from the front line, and were held in reserve until our Division, the 68th, should move into line.

The night of July 5, or rather at 1 A.M. on July 6, we had our first real thrill. We were awakened suddenly by a terrific crash which seemed to have taken place within an inch of our ears. The crash was followed by two more. Immediately the whole valley seemed alive with anti-aircraft guns, searchlights and tracer lights. A French "75" bellowed forth within a hundred yards of the cantonment. In the short intermissions of silence we could hear, far above us, the faint purring of an aeroplane. We were in the centre of a German aerial bombing party. Altogether six bombs were dropped, the one that awakened us falling within a hundred yards of our cantonment. The following morning we were requested by French officers to take down the large American flag which flew over our barracks. It had been raised on the Fourth of July. In the opinion of the Frenchmen this flag had drawn the attack.

A couple of days after the air raid just mentioned, six of

our cars were loaned to a French section during one of the hottest attacks of the season on the Chemin des Dames. The French section with whom our six cars worked had lost one man killed during the night. For hours our boys had run back and forth over roads strange to them, past woods full of French batteries. They had made one trip to Paissy, an advanced *poste de secours*, and the rest of the time had taken wounded from a *triage* at Œuilly to points farther in the rear, which necessitated crossing the bridges over the Aisne and the Aisne Canal on every trip, under regular shell-fire.

When that work was about done, the relief found these men sitting under a little tent at Œuilly, haggard and tired, too nervous to sleep. A few weeks later, when such experiences were an everyday occurrence, they could laugh at their emotions over the original trip to Paissy. All now freely admit that they had been scared. Long afterwards Fred Smith confessed that before going out to replace Swain and his damaged ambulance, he had hurriedly written home a "last letter," saying he did n't know whether he would ever come back alive.

All June, July, and sporadically in August and September, the army of the Crown Prince attempted in vain to push the French off the California Plateau and the Chemin des Dames — a road coursing along the top of the plateau from east to west for about twenty-five kilometres, constructed by Louis XV to facilitate the visits of one of his daughters to her maid of honor. Attack after attack was delivered, masses of men were hurled lavishly into the attempt, but the French held their ground. Opposite Cerny the front lines were only forty metres apart, and the plateau became a great upheaved stretch of shell-holes. Trenches disappeared and men lived and fought in improvised troughs between shell-holes.

Gas and liquid fire played their part in the struggle. The lay of the land was such as to favor the effectiveness of the gas, for by pouring gas-shells into the valleys which cut into the plateau, it would settle there, and traf-

## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

fic along the valley road for artillery trains, infantry, or ambulances — be rendered very dangerous. Much of the artillery itself was reached by the fumes. It was estimated that the Germans were pouring forty thousand gas-shells a day into the ranks and rear of the French along that one small sector. Such was the sector to which we had come, all of us except our *Chef* uninitiated into the sights and sounds of war.

### TAKING OVER THE POSTES

ON July 11 the 68th Division moved into the line and we took over our *postes*, the two little villages of Vendresse and Cuissy-et-Geny, the first-named being an advance station less than eight hundred metres from the Boche lines, and the latter an artillery *poste de secours* farther in the rear. Besides we made trips on call to Madagascar Hill, an artillery *poste*, and evacuated to a *triage* at Longueval. We maintained three cars at Vendresse, working exclusively between Vendresse and Longueval, and four cars at Longueval, evacuating the transportable wounded to hospitals at Saint-Gilles, Courlandon, Mont Notre Dame, and other towns. Ambulances were sent to the artillery *postes* only on receiving a call therefrom by telephone. The Section had been divided into two squads of ten cars, each under a *Sous-Chef*. Squad 1 was headed by Caldwell and Squad 2 by Quirin. The squads took turns of two days on duty and two days *en repos*, although it was soon apparent that with the normal number of accidents and mishaps, one squad was rarely sufficient to do the work required, and the other had to be called on for cars.

Our cantonment for the first two weeks at Villers-en-Prayères was worse than none. It consisted of a small ruined house of two floors, with one room downstairs and two above. The lower room was, with great difficulty, made to accommodate eleven stretchers. A whole division of rats was cantoned there also. Of the two rooms above, accessible only by a sort of ladder outside, one

was fair, with not too many holes in the roof, while the other had approximately only three walls, and not all of either the floor or ceiling. Practically all equipment had to be stored in a little shed in the rear, which also served as a dining-room, and where there was place for only about two thirds of the Section to eat at one time.

Vendresse was a little town about three miles from the edge of the Aisne. The road crossed the Aisne Canal and River and the Oise Canal at Bourg-et-Comin, and passing through this town, coursed up the valley, over a hundred yards of poorly improvised board road past Madagascar Hill, the side of which was thick with French cannon, past the Moulins fork and the woods thick with hidden guns, to the left around a slight rise into a thoroughly exposed half-kilometre of road in plain view of the Germans on the plateau at the east corner of the valley. At this rise was a turn-out and sign-post directing all vehicles to turn there and go no farther. Such signs, however, are not meant for ambulances. In fact ambulances usually go anywhere in France, gendarmes and military zones notwithstanding, so complete is the right-of-way of the red cross.

Our way through Vendresse took us to the west end of the town, where we backed into a court between two stone walls. In the southeast corner of the court was a passageway, thatched and covered with sandbags, which led to a stairway down into the magnificent subterranean vaults which constituted the *poste de secours*, where were in all, three levels, one beneath the other, each level containing spacious chambers and passages cut in the rock. To the north, a long passageway led beneath to a ruined château across the road, where stairs mounted to another outer opening. Northern France is replete with such caves and cellars. The one at our *poste* is said to have been used as the wine and mushroom cellar of the château. These caves and cellars furnished admirable refuge for the wounded in the Great War. Indeed the whole system of evacuating wounded was adapted to whatever happened to be the scheme of things as the Frenchman found



## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

it. There seemed to be no inflexible rule and system of *postes* and hospitals, and it was better that there was not.

Once inside the cellar at Vendresse, wounded, stretcher-bearers, doctors, and ambulance drivers were perfectly safe. Shells might land directly above the cellar, as they frequently did, creating no more terrifying manifestation than a dull thud and the shaking of a few chips of rock from the ceiling. It was always a relief to know that, having run the gauntlet of shells and gas from Bourg-et-Comin, one here was safe at least for a few minutes.

The story of our experiences at Vendresse, if complete, would fill a chapter in itself, and must necessarily be restricted. On their first trip to the *poste*, Gemmill and Myers, on Car 2, missed the turn-off into the town and continued on the Troyon road, climbing up the plateau. Suddenly they saw the heads of Frenchmen peering out of a trench ahead and arms in blue wildly gesticulating to them to turn back. It was the reserve line of trenches, the occupants of which were in terror lest the cloud of dust created by the ambulance might draw on them the German fire. Gemmill, who was an excellent driver, did not stop to turn around, but simply backed down the slope and around into Vendresse at full speed. Holton and Atherton, on Number 8, on one of their first trips, had the uncanny experience of seeing a Frenchman, some thirty yards ahead on the road, blown into atoms by an *obus*.

Cuissy, our artillery *poste*, was a different affair — a cave hollowed out in the side of a cliff high on a plateau. There were two routes to it, one the road up over the plateau from Œuilly, the other an old wagon-road across a field, through the valley and up a steep slope — a constant succession of shell-holes and, on rainy days, almost impassable. Though we made some twenty-five or thirty trips to Cuissy we miraculously escaped without having a single casualty among the men, but we did suffer seriously in regard to the cars. There was scarcely a car among the twenty Berliets but showed traces of its Cuissy trip, the damage being anywhere from the complete dem-



olition of the ambulance to having a horn or a fender ripped off by *éclats*. Car 10 made a memorable night trip, with Lowes and Hawley Smith as drivers, in which the car was punctured with thirty-seven *éclat* holes and neither driver was hurt. Car 1, while its drivers, Page and Tallmadge, were standing only a few feet away, received a shell through the top, which, curiously, did not explode, and after going through the seat and tool-box, buried itself several feet in the ground.

### A STRONG ATTACK

THE climax of our first visit to the Chemin des Dames sector came with the attack of July 30. Artillery fire in the afternoon further demolished the remains of the buildings above the *abri* and *poste* and the buildings around the court, as well as the two cars standing there at the time. When relief cars and the little Ford staff car containing the *Chef* and *Sous-Chef* arrived, they found every room of the *poste* packed with wounded. There had been a terrific German attack in the afternoon, in which the Boches threatened to break clear though the French lines. They had broken the first two lines of trenches at several points and advance bombing-parties had reached Troyon, a half-kilometre away. The French had been digging a new line of trenches about two hundred metres behind Vendresse, preparing to fall back. All the afternoon our boys had been in the *poste*, listening to the directions of the *Médecin Chef* as to the best way to gain safety in case this occurred. Two regiments of our Division, which had been relieved in the morning, preparing to go *en repos*, had been rushed back to attempt to hold the advance and to retake the lost ground.

Immediately the work of evacuating the wounded was undertaken. Before long we had to call on every car we had left, making in all thirteen cars serving Vendresse, four serving the halfway station at Longueval, and one reserved for Cuissy calls. As fast as one car was loaded and sent off, another was backed into the courtyard. Finally

## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

we reached a point where we had not a single car left, and with wounded still coming in. Then came the discouraging news that Number 2 had rolled off a wheel near Bourg and had had to transfer its load to another car; that Number 5 had run into Number 19 near the curve at Vendresse, putting Number 5 out of commission with a bent axle; and that Number 11 had smashed its oil-tank on a shell-hole.

Thus crippled we continued to do the work, instructing every driver to lose no time. Providence was with us, however, for no sooner would we ship off the last car and start praying for another to arrive than we would hear the welcome whirr of a Berliet motor speeding up to Vendresse. Toward morning conditions were relieved by the decreasing number of wounded and by the return of car 2. By six o'clock we were able to send back all but three cars, and to arrange for hauling back cars 4 and 11. Car 3 could not be moved and had to be taken by a tractor on the following day.

In the afternoon of August 1, Henry Cooper performed a deed for which he deserves much credit. A wagon full of hand grenades had been wrecked on the Vendresse road and the grenades lay scattered around for a space of thirty or forty feet. Before Cooper arrived there with his ambulance several French infantrymen had been killed and many more wounded in walking over these grenades. Thereupon Cooper sent his driving partner on with the ambulance, while he himself remained behind and spent well over an hour in clearing the road of the danger and in warning Frenchmen who passed.

### EN REPOS

It was a tired Section that left Villers-en-Prayères on August 2 for a well-earned rest in the rear; and it was more than a tired-looking line of cars, not a single one of them having escaped some degree of battering. Yet it was a happy crowd, particularly so because we had not had a single casualty, whereas all the other sections in the sec-

tor, with less dangerous *postes*, had suffered at least one casualty — Field Service Section Sixty-Six to the right having lost two men, the French section to the left, one, and the section which preceded us at our *postes* having lost three men. The graves of the latter at Longueval had held an ominous significance for all of us.

While we were *en repos* at Bézu-Saint-Germain, near Château-Thierry, we were given our divisional citation. The citation ceremony was a memorable event. We marched onto a large field presenting a glorious view of the Marne Valley. Here we found our Division, its ranks sadly depleted by the last three weeks of fighting. Many awards of medals were made, and finally came our turn. As the General turned toward us, the Division band played the "Star-Spangled Banner," followed by the *Marseillaise*. Never had we felt as we did then the stirring beauty of those battle calls of freedom, and never had we realized so strongly the bond of a common cause which linked us to those thousands of onlooking Frenchmen. There were tears in many eyes. Fred Spencer was the standard-bearer. The General of the Division pinned a *Croix de Guerre* on our flag and then kissed Fred on both cheeks. Fred turned around and grinned!

A week at Ronchères followed. Here we were given nineteen bumpy Fiats for our Berliets, and again attached to a division — this time the 151st. In addition, we made the acquaintance of a regiment of Senegalese, whom Hawley Smith endeavored to teach the English language by offering them bribes of cigarettes.

### THE RETURN TO THE SAME SECTOR

WHEN we returned to the front after our *repos* the Section was somewhat changed. Lieutenant Blachot had left some time previously to go into the Transport Service. Lieutenant Max Decugis, the tennis champion of France, had succeeded him, but he too left at the end of August, regretted and regretful.

On August 20 we returned to our old sector, the

## SECTION SIXTY-FIVE

---

same cantonment and the same *postes*, with Moulins, Paissy, Pargnan, Jumigny, and work at Œuilly added. The situation had now quieted down so that we were able to do the work previously done by our Section and another. For the most part our second sojourn at the Chemin des Dames offers few unusual incidents. The wounded were less numerous, though more cars were actually on duty. Perhaps the most notable part of the four weeks was the nightly cloud of gas which the Boches poured in as regularly as clockwork. Many times entire trips to the *postes* had to be made through gas-fumes, and once in a while the gas crossed the Aisne and extended into Villers-en-Prayères, which was now occasionally under fire. The bridge across the Aisne to Œuilly was continually under shell-fire, and a rain of *éclats* pattered into the village, their force spent.

Another notable part of these weeks was running a gauntlet of air raids on the way to the hospitals. We no longer evacuated to Longueval and frequently had to go clear to Montigny, some forty kilometres away through Fismes and Courlandon. Every night Fismes, Courlandon, and Montigny were subjected to air raids, and our ambulances seemed to follow the planes from one town to another, arriving just in time for fireworks at each place.

### A LUCKY ESCAPE

ON one day early in our second visit to the Chemin des Dames four of our cars were stationed near a château at Œuilly. The *État-Major* of the Division was lodged in this château. Suddenly a salvo of shells broke the tranquillity of what had been a very quiet day. The first of these shells which rained on the château lit about thirty feet in front of a row of four of our cars, on the road, awaiting their turn to go to their *postes*. It smashed the radiators of two of them and riddled them with *éclat* holes. Of our eight men, some sitting in front of cars, and some lying down inside, two, only, were scratched and the rest escaped unhurt. However, two Frenchmen much farther



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

away were killed and some fifteen more wounded. Barker, sitting on the front seat of car 20, had his figure outlined on the wall of the car with *éclat* holes: one a half-inch above his head, another taking off the horn by his arm, and a third tearing through the fender and into the car just beneath his feet. The boys say he looked up in mild surprise.

### PAUL C. BENTLEY KILLED

JUST before the official demise of the old organization, the tragedy occurred which marred the happy record of the Section and must always inject a sad note into memories of an otherwise glorious summer. I refer to the death of Paul C. Bentley,<sup>1</sup> who succumbed on September 16 to wounds received while on duty three days before. At the same time and by the same shell, Carson Ricks, a new member of the Section, suffered wounds which may cost him the use of one arm. Paul's brave fight after his wounds had laid him low was an inspiration and an example of quiet courage.

Gradually the complexion of the Section was changing, and one could not but feel intuitively that the days of old Sixty-Five were about numbered. In fact, at the end of September, the U.S. Army took us over. Eight members enlisted, the rest having made plans to go into other work, and thus ended the existence of Section Sixty-Five.

LOUIS G. CALDWELL<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul Cody Bentley, of Chicago, Illinois; Harvard, '17; joined the Field Service in May, 1917; served in Section Sixty-Five; he was wounded at the Chemin des Dames on September 13, 1917, and died three days later.

<sup>2</sup> Of Oak Park, Illinois; Amherst, '13; North-Western, '16; served in the Field Service as *Sous-Chef* of Section Sixty-Five until September, 1917; subsequently a *Sous-Lieutenant* in French Artillery.





THE END OF AN AMBULANCE



## II

### REMEMBERINGS

AFTER Sixty-Five left May, it went by way of Paris to Beauvais, which had not seen many Americans before, and the *élite* of the town received us with open arms. We were curiosities in those days. Then there were the "*vieilles dames, un peu sourdes,*" and toothless, who had to be reassured time after time that we really were Americans. "*Vous-êtes des américains, Messieurs!*" — "*Ah*" — "*Vous êtes nombreux en France?*" "*Ah!*" "*Tiens! Tiens!*" "*C'est loin l'Amérique, n'est-ce pas?*" "*Mais vous-avez tous des belles dents. Comment se fait-il?*" They were a dear lot, those old, inquisitive, and kindly ladies at Beauvais.

Across the road from us at Courcelles was a *Midi* regiment from the 68th Division, to which we were later attached. We gave them cigarettes for songs, and wine for knickknacks and souvenirs. They made canes, hammered brass, and laundered during the spare time of waiting for the day of going up. Section Sixty-Five spent the time watching planes, peeling "spuds," writing reams of letters, and discussing the big issues of the war. The night before we went up with the Division we took a can of *pinard* out under the apple trees and drew over a group of *poilus*, who sang their songs of the Midi provinces — "*Montagnard,*" "*Gardez mes amours toujours,*" "*Ah, pays lointain,*" "*L'Arlesienne*" — some gay, some passionate, and others sentimental — so justifiably sentimental during those occasional hours of reflection and uncertainty. I remember afterwards looking among the regiments of the Division, after their hard losses above Craonne in July — looking for these fellows from the Midi who sang for us under the trees at Courcelles. I

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

wanted to learn all the words of "*L'Arlesienne, la belle divine*," but I never saw but one of the lot after they went into line: I carried him to Longueval. He sang a tune much different from the airs of Provence — a blubber and an unconscious moan. We shall never hear those airs again and find them half so fine, for all they may be sung by finer voices. The background of those days will never be again. And if it should be, we would not be young and sensitive — it would all seem changed.

. . . . .

At Villers-en-Prayères part of the church was still standing and *l'Américain* often dropped in off duty to play a bit of "Ziegfeld's Follies" on the wheezy harmonium. Why not? Was not "jazz" a sacred thing to him? An old woman used to pass the cantonment every evening on her way to the church to burn a candle for her son lost in the war. She was feeble and obviously poor — and candles were high. Thereby hangs a tale of a man of Section Sixty-Five, who, though not outwardly so, was without a doubt the finest Christian gentleman we had. His particular charities were his sympathy and dealings with old ladies. He gave this particular one, as regularly as she came, a bottle of much-coveted and valuable petrol for her altar lamp; she gave him prayers and kindness in return. He may not have believed in the efficacy of the prayers, but he believed in sympathy and kindness — and he learned much from the "*vieilles dames*" of our beloved France.

RAYMOND W. GAUGER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Champaign, Illinois; University of Illinois, '17; joined the Field Service in May, 1917; served with Section Sixty-Five; subsequently a member of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION SIXTY-FIVE came into Paris in September, 1917, with eight old members enlisted in the U.S. Army. Fourteen men from the newly arrived Syracuse Unit were placed in "Sixty-Five," and on the morning of September 22, 1917, with new Ford cars, and Lieutenant Sponagle in command, the Section left for the war zone again. It then took up life *en repos*, not being attached to any Division, but remaining at Fère-en-Tardenois from September until November, 1917. At about this time the Section was officially renumbered Six-Twenty-Two.

On December 22 we were attached to the 121st Division, on the Chemin des Dames, and had Œuilly for a cantonment, with *postes de secours* at Oulches, Paissy, Verneuil, and Vendresse. It left the Aisne sector in April, 1918, with the 121st Division, and convoyed to Poperinghe, Belgium, in the Ypres-Mont Kemmel sector. The work was very hard and dangerous, but the Section finally came out, without any losses, in the last part of May.

*Repos* for ten days followed at Beauvais. Then the Section was ordered into line near Estrées-Saint-Denis, on the Montdidier-Noyon front. It continued in this Oise sector, near Compiègne, for some time, with its cantonment at Remy. During the attack on Ferme-Porte and Ferme-des-Loges in the first week in August, a big advance was made. Then followed the battle of Lassigny. The headquarters of the Section was at Bayencourt, outside Ressons-sur-Matz. Two men, Raymond Gauger and Leo Smith, were wounded here by *éclats*. Following the Lassigny battle and the German retreat, steady progress followed toward Saint-Quentin and La Fère. Then the 121st Division was ordered to the Chemin des Dames, and we followed, going into line at Vailly, between Soissons and Braisne, and having a *poste* at Ostel. It was here that Hugh McNair lost his right leg when he was struck by a large piece of *éclat*. It was here, too, that we received a section citation.

On October 13, 1918, we crossed the Chemin des Dames, following the German retreat, and had a cantonment at Bruyères, near Laon. We advanced steadily from this time, and



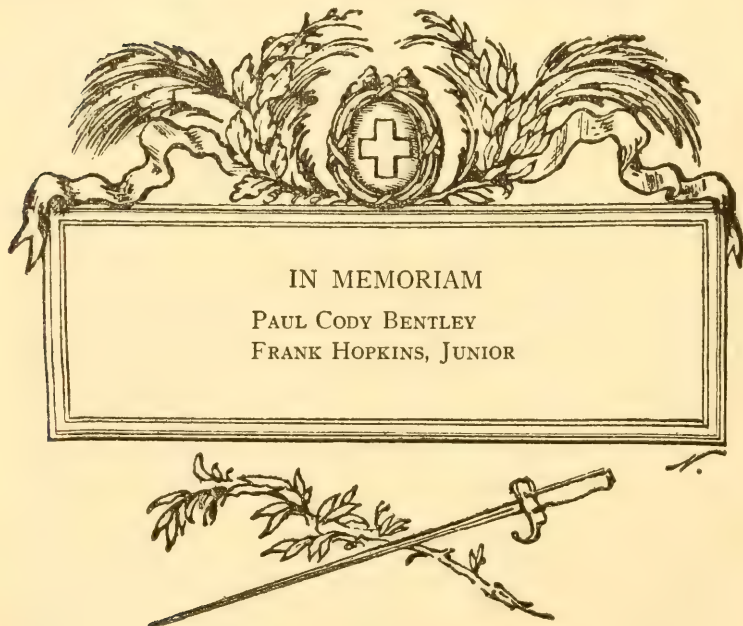
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

the Armistice found us at Auvillers, near Rocroi, on the Belgian frontier. We returned to Samoussy, near Laon, until December 10. Then we started for Germany, the Division marching all the way, *via* Reims, Châlons, and Nancy, and across the Lorraine frontier at Nomeny to Saargemund. The Division then broke up and we went to Saargemund, and then to Saint-Avold, near Metz. On March 25 the Section was ordered in to Versailles, and the U.S.A. Ambulance Service Base Camp at Ferrières.

PAUL A. REDMOND <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Syracuse, New York. U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.



## *Section Twenty-Nine*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. JOHN TEMPEST WALKER, JR.

II. RICHARD O. BATTLES

## SUMMARY

SECTION TWENTY-NINE left Paris on June 30, 1917, and going by Châlons and Bar-le-Duc, reached Condé-en-Barrois on July 2. On July 23 it went to Ville-sur-Cousances (Meuse) and served the *postes* of Esnes, Dombasle, and Bois de Béthelainville. It evacuated to the hospitals of Brocourt and Fleury-sur-Aire. On August 22 it left Ville-sur-Cousances for *repos* at Menil-la-Horgne. On September 2 it went to Saint-Mihiel, serving *postes* at Belle-Vallée, Marcaulieu, Village Nègre, Pierrefitte, and Villotte. On October 17 it went *en repos* at Silmont-en-Barrois, and on October 26 it moved to a cantonment at Belrupt, Chaume Woods, and served at Carrière d'Haudromont, near Verdun. It was at this time that the Service was militarized and the cars of Section Twenty-Nine were taken over by members of old Section Seventy-One to be known thereafter as Section Six-Forty-One of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Twenty-Nine

Again, again they come with shell and steel  
To storm thee, and to crush thy ramparts down,  
And trample over France with iron heel,  
Burning and devastating field and town.  
Yet, day by day, we see thy grim forts stand.  
All hail, Verdun, defender of the land!

WILLIAM C. SANGER, JR.

### I

#### PARIS TO VERDUN

ON the morning of June 30, 1917, Section Twenty-Nine rolled out of the lower gate of 21 rue Raynouard to begin its comparatively short but withal interesting career. We got out of Paris without mishap, although the movements and order of our convoy were not in every particular exactly according to Hoyle, and at noon all reached Meaux, where we stopped for a cold lunch of "monkey-meat" and bread. We arrived at Montmirail shortly before dark and, after another cold meal, set up our beds on the second floor of an abandoned school building. Châlons was our next official stop where we paused for lunch and *essence*, and then drove on to Bar-le-Duc, where we drew up about 7 P.M., placed our cars outside the automobile *parc*, and with the customary "monkey meat"

and bread for dinner, took our beds into one of the barracks and bunked for the night. Next morning, July 2, we drove to Condé, where we found very comfortable quarters in a wooden barrack, formerly a hospital ward, located on the top of a high hill, above the town, overlooking in all directions miles of beautiful rolling farm lands.

On the morning of July 3, the General of our Division paid us the honor of a visit and reviewed us, and the next night we celebrated the Glorious Fourth in real style. Our cook outdid himself in producing a bountiful repast of many courses which the Colonel of our *Service de Santé* shared with us as our principal guest. After many songs, toasts, and speeches, the party broke up after the singing of the "*Marseillaise*" and the "Star-Spangled Banner" and shouting the customary "*Vive la France!*" "*Vive l'Amérique!*" July 14, the French national holiday, furnished a good excuse for a similar party, which possibly surpassed, as regards the menu, post-prandial oratory, and patriotic enthusiasm, the one given on the Fourth.

On the morning of July 23, we packed up and left Condé on short notice, and about noon reached Ville-sur-Cou-sances, where we relieved Section Two, taking over their cantonment and their *postes*. Our front *poste de secours* was at Esnes, with a relay *poste* at Montzévillie. We had a call *poste* at Dombasle, kept one car always on duty at a *poste* in the Bois de Béthelainville, and evacuated to Bro-court. On the night of the 23d four cars began the work, and from then on we had plenty to keep us busy, for the sector was not a quiet one.

### NEWLIN KILLED — ALLEN WOUNDED

ALL went well until the night of August 3, when a "77" fell only a few feet from the entrance to our *abri* at Montzévillie, a piece of *éclat* striking Julian Allen in the knee and wounding him painfully, though not seriously, while another piece hit Newlin<sup>1</sup> in the back, hurting him dan-

<sup>1</sup> John Verplanck Newlin, of Whitford, Pennsylvania; Princeton, '19; joined



## SECTION TWENTY-NINE

---

gerously. Newlin's and Ball's cars were smashed almost beyond recognition, and Martin and Hughes narrowly escaped being hurt. Allen and Newlin were rushed to the hospital at Ville-sur-Cousances and from there taken to the hospital at Fleury. The wound of the former, though more serious than we thought at first, proved to be not dangerous. At noon on August 5 he was evacuated to Paris. But Newlin's condition was critical. He was so weak that he could not be operated upon until the evening of the 4th. The operation was apparently successful and he showed signs of such great improvement that the French Commander of the Section, Lieutenant Latruffe, with four of the fellows, called on him on the afternoon of August 5 to present him with his *Croix de Guerre* and the Division citation. But at midnight we received word from the hospital that poor Jack was dead. It was a great shock to all of us, for he was a wonderfully brave and nervy lad and we had all grown very fond of him.

It was a blow to the Section to lose our *Chef*, Allen, and one of our men, after such a short time out at the front, and we had to go on as best we could without any authorized leader, though Paxton and Walker, who had been left in charge, succeeded, by dividing the work and the responsibility, in bringing us creditably through a long spell of hard, gruelling work. Later, on September 10, Fletcher, from Section Fourteen, came over to take Allen's place as *Chef* until the latter returned from the hospital.

### VERDUN TO SAINT-MIHIEL

ON August 21 we were relieved by a French ambulance section, and although we had seen enough of Esnes and Montzéville, we were sorry that we could not stay for the big attack which was imminent. We packed up our belongings and that afternoon moved, *via* Bar-le-Duc, to Menil-la-Horgne where we were *en repos* until Septem-

the Field Service in May, 1917; served with Section Twenty-Nine; died of wounds, received while on duty at Montzéville, on August 5, 1917.

ber 2, when we followed our Division to the Saint-Mihiel sector and made our headquarters at Rupt. After working near Hill 304 and Mort Homme, our new *postes*, at Belle Vallée, Marcaulieu, Village Nègre, Pierrefitte, and Villotte, seemed very tame.

At Rupt we had at our disposal only the cold, damp semi-cellars and draughty, leaky hay-lofts that the town boasted; so on September 20 we moved to Villotte, six kilometres from Rupt, with the expectation of finding better living quarters. But we had no luck, for we were ushered into a big hay-loft which, had it not been for the numerous and large holes in the roof, would have been very meagrely ventilated and lighted, as it had but two miniature windows. It rained hard the first night, and by morning our hoped-for *apartement de luxe* resembled a huge shower bath.

During all these long monotonous days and the longer and more monotonous evenings, the chief topic of conversation was the impending arrival of the U.S. recruiting officers and what the future status of the Ambulance Service would be. They finally arrived on September 29, but found rather slim picking in Section Twenty-Nine, for Ball, Alling, Smith, and Walker were the only men who signed up with the U.S. Army for the duration of the war.

Fletcher went to Paris on October 1 for forty-eight hours' *permission*, and almost as soon as he had stepped out of the train a taxicab knocked him down. He was taken in an ambulance to the hospital at Neuilly, where he was found to be so badly shaken up that he was unable to return to the Section, whereupon we all decided that the easiest and quickest way to get to a hospital was to be appointed *Chef* of Section Twenty-Nine.

On October 17 the glad tidings reached us that we were to be relieved by a French section, and the next day, shortly after noon, we were on our way, splashing and rattling through mud and rain, to Silmont for a short *repos*. Our new cantonment was much better than any we

LA TERRE PROMISE





## SECTION TWENTY-NINE

---

had seen for a long time, and we were near enough to Bar-le-Duc to be able to run in there for the day. So things in general began to take on a more rosy aspect.

General Mordac visited Silmont on October 22 in order to inspect the 38th Regiment of our Division — the 120th. We were reviewed at the same time and were highly praised by the General for our work at Esnes and Montzéville during the month of August.

### WORK AT VERDUN AGAIN — SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

ON October 26 we moved to Belrupt, near Verdun, and at once jumped into hard, active work. Our *poste* was at Haudromont, not far from Hill 344 and the Chaume Woods, and we evacuated to Bévaux, just outside the walls of Verdun. The roads were very rough and muddy, winding up and down steep hills and around sharp corners, thus making driving very difficult and hazardous. The shelling during the day was very light, but at night the Boches kept up an almost incessant fire while the artillery and *ravitaillement* were being brought up. On account of the heavy traffic on the roads and because of the prevalence of gas, the ambulances were not allowed to run at night; so all our work was done between the hours of 6 A.M. and 5 P. M.

Section Seventy-One arrived on the morning of November 3, to take over our cars, and the next morning ten cars went up to the *poste*, each taking one of the new men in order to show him the road. When we reached Haudromont, several big shells came in uncomfortably close to us, which was the first time we had seen any such activity in this vicinity; and it was hardly a cordial welcome for Seventy-One. In the midst of it all, the Section Twenty-Nine men piled into two ambulances and drove back to Belrupt, where it took us only a short time to pack up our belongings, so that by ten-thirty the big *camion* was ready to leave. We pulled into the automobile park at "Bar" about three-thirty and were imprisoned until dinner time, when, only by dint of heavy persuading and a few "*non*



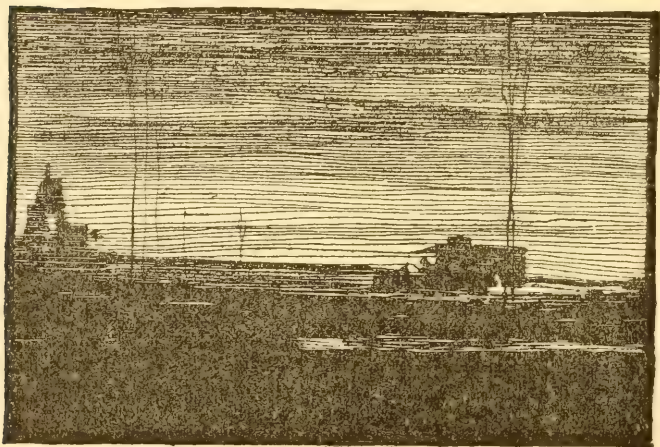
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*comprends,"* we got permission to go out to the meal. We spent the night — that is, what there was of it — in one of the park barracks, most of us sleeping in true-to-form *poilu* straw and chicken-wire bunks, and at 3 A.M. turned out to catch our train for Paris, where we arrived shortly after noon, and, except for a big farewell banquet at the café La Pérouse on the evening of November 6, old Section Twenty-Nine had no more entries to make in its diary.

JOHN TEMPEST WALKER, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brookline, Massachusetts; Brown, '13; served with Section Twenty-Nine of the Field Service and subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service with the French Army.



## II

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

ON November 3 Section Seventy-One arrived at Belrupt late in the afternoon to take over the cars of Section Twenty-Nine. The sector proved anything but quiet. During six weeks there we lost five cars at the *abri*, and Way Spaulding was severely wounded. Here the Section became officially renumbered Six-Forty-One.

On December 16 we convoyed to Andernay for *repos*. On December 27 the Section moved to Clermont-en-Argonne, where our Division went into line between Vauquois and the extreme left of the Bois d'Avocourt. Our hardest work in the Argonne came on the 16th of March, 1918, when one of our regiments went over in a *grand coup de main*, taking about one hundred prisoners and advancing as far as the German light artillery positions.

Later we were ordered to Rarécourt. We continued, however, to work the same *postes* as before. On May 16 we left the sector, going to Épense for a short *repos*. It was here that we became detached from the 120th Division, which was to move a long distance. We were not long detached, however, for after one day we were sent to Rambluzin and attached to the 17th Division, which was then in line at Saint-Mihiel. During the latter part of July, after a short *repos* at Vavincourt, the Division was ordered into the Tenth Army, and we followed in convoy. We were stationed at Vierzy, southwest of Soissons, and worked a *poste* from Ambrief. The work continued, and we followed up the German retreat. Evacuations were made to Villers-Cotterets — a four hours' round trip. On August 11 we were moved back to Rétheuil, near Pierrefonds, for a week's *repos*. On August 19 we left Rétheuil for Cuise-Lamotte, from which place we expected to work *postes*. But the Boches were retreating so fast that, at two in the morning on August 20, we were routed out from under haystacks, cars, etc., to roll on up the Soissons-Compiègne highway, amid the heavy cannon thundering on every side, to cross the Aisne and pass through Attichy to the "farm" in question, where we waited until 2 P.M., when we proceeded. When we stopped our cars at the ordered point, we found ourselves — cars, kitchen, and *conducteurs* — at a reserve-line *poste de secours*,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

which, as a matter of fact, was still being used as Section Two's front *poste*! The battle was continuing, with the guns firing behind us, and now and then a battalion advancing in deployed order. A Moroccan officer stepped up to us and said, "What in hell are you young fools doing up here in convoy? Don't you know that a half-hour ago this was on the front, and a very unhealthy spot?" The smoke of a Boche *barrage* had hardly yet cleared away, and the occasional shells that fell in a field close by made us believe him unquestioningly. Prisoners were constantly filing back from the front. This spot was a few kilometers east of the famous village of Moulin-sous-Touvent, where such heavy fighting took place. But despite the warnings we were forced to stay here for two hours until new orders came sending us to a new and healthier destination. Our new destination was Sacy, where we spent one night, moving early the next morning to the outskirts of Vic-sur-Aisne.

About dark on August 21 we moved still farther up, this time to a point on the road about one kilometre from Morsain. We parked in a field, only to be driven out by a French artillery officer, who said he was going to use that position for his battery of "105's." It was the *guerre de mouvement* with a vengeance. Our Division went into line here, and we immediately received a call for all available cars. We worked here for seventy-two consecutive hours, the *postes* being Vassens, Bonnemaïson, Saint-Liger, and La Croix Blanche. The work continued more or less steadily for two weeks, until Coucy-le-Château was reached, twenty-three kilometres from Vic. Fearing was wounded painfully, but not seriously, at *poste* on the 26th. For our work on the 23d and 24th of August we received a sectional citation.

On the 10th of September we again moved up, this time to Vézaponin, and worked from there a relay *poste* at Vézaponin, and advanced *postes* at Leuilly and Blanc Pierre. The work was heavy and disagreeable, as it had been for the past two weeks, so it was with great relief and pleasure that we were sent back *en repos* on September 19. *Repos* took us clear back to Dammartin.

About the 10th of October we again moved to the front, this time to Acy, *en réserve*, with only the usual car or so on duty with the *G.B.D.* After a short time we moved farther up, going to Jouy, on the other side of the Aisne, where we spent ten days, living alongside the road and sleeping in our cars.

On October 24 we moved still farther on, going to Bucy-lès-Cerny, a short distance outside of Laon. From here the

## SECTION TWENTY-NINE

---

Section started working the *postes* of Verneuil and Maison Blanche. The work here was very active and unpleasant. It was at Verneuil that Way Spaulding received his second wound, a small piece of *éclat* piercing his hand. Swasey was also wounded these last few days of action, receiving a shell fragment through the calf of his leg. This was the beginning of the end. The Germans were holding on along the Serre River, but on November 4 the retreat started and we again commenced the tiresome following up.

The cars on duty had gone on with the *G.B.D.* and *brancardiers*, and no one knew where they were. How we ever moved over roads full of mine craters and with the flimsiest improvised bridges over the streams, no one will ever know. We did n't ourselves, but somehow we got there. We stopped at Marle eight hours after the victorious French infantry had taken it, and on seeing Americans for the first time the inhabitants, four years in German servitude, went wild. They were wretched specimens — shadows of their former selves.

No one knew exactly where the Germans were. We could hear no guns, and the only news we could obtain was from the French civilians who had run back from their homes when the lines had passed eastward. Here for the first time in long months carelessness was shown as to lights. In two days we moved to Harcigny, near Vervins, not far from Hirson on the Belgian border. This was a move of thirty kilometres, and still there seemed to be no trace of the retreating Germans. Here we camped and lived with fires and lights as if we were a thousand miles from shells and bombing-planes. We started to work our *postes* from here, but the evacuations were 120 kilometres to the hospital and back, over terrible roads. Rumors of an armistice had floated about, but every one had taken them with the usual grain of salt. However, on the morning of November 11 a lieutenant from the French Staff stuck his head in the door of our shack at six in the morning and officially announced that the Armistice had been signed and hostilities would cease at eleven. There was not a sound except the moving of huddled forms under their blankets. . . . Finally some one said, "Is this a jam morning, or do we get only bread?" . . . Everything went on as before. Nothing seemed changed. What was it? Were we all too stunned by the news to feel any real emotion, or had we become immune to such things?

We stayed in Harcigny until November 13, and then started our long convoy back into France, and on again into the armies of occupation. On the 12th, fifteen of us (the rest were still on duty taking care of their last *blessés de la guerre*)



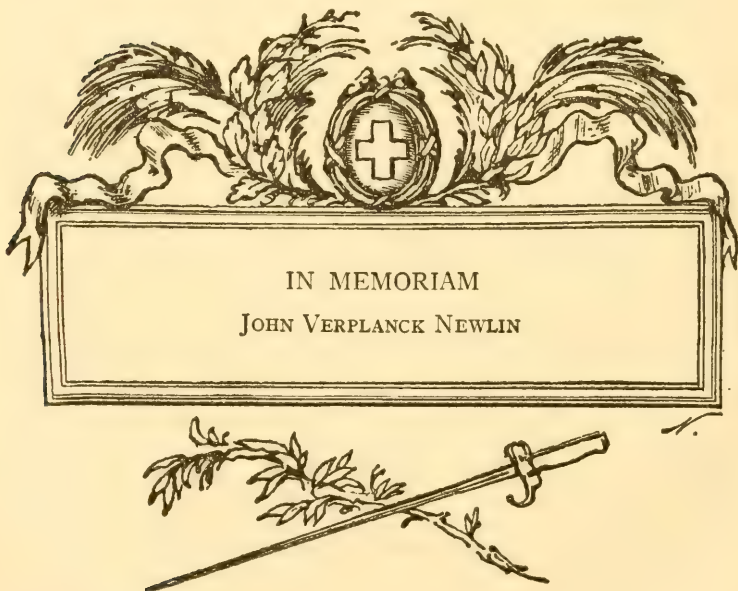
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

lined up as a guard of honor to our Divisional General, and watched our three French regiments, the 90th, the 355th, and 68th, march back from the lines — their work completed forever. It was a moving sight. They filed by, dirty, lousy, with weeks' growth of beard, tired and weary to the point of exhaustion — but never again to return to the hell of the trenches or the roaring, upturned fields of battle . . . the fellows in blue with whom we had worked to the end, comrades every one. Every man's heart was with them, as they filed by, and always will be as long as the memory of that day remains.

RICHARD O. BATTLES <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; served in Section Seventy-One of the Field Service and in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.





## *Section Sixty-Six*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. STANLEY B. JONES
- II. WILLIAM GORHAM RICE, JR.
- III. PERLEY R. HAMILTON
- IV. WALTER D. CARR

## SUMMARY

SECTION SIXTY-SIX began, after a period at May-en-Multien, at Cramaille. It moved on July 4 to Glennes, with Beaurieux as field headquarters, and worked the *postes* at the Moulin Rouge, Oulches, Flandres, and Village Nègre, and evacuated to Saint-Gilles, and Meurival. Then followed a *repos* near Château-Thierry, and moves to Nesle and Villomé in that neighborhood. On August 23 it moved north of the Aisne to Cuiry-les-Chaudardes, working *postes* at Monaco, Aurousseau, and Craonnelle, just under the Chemin des Dames. It was enlisted during September, 1917, in the U.S. Army Ambulance Service and subsequently became Section Six-Twenty-Three.



## *Section Sixty-Six*

There's a strip of the Earth  
That's of infinite worth,  
    Though a craterous, sterile space;  
Its border's a trench  
And the ground of it's French,  
    But it's leased by the human race.

JOHN FINLEY

### I

## THE BEGINNINGS OF SECTION SIXTY-SIX

AT rue Raynouard, a group of Dartmouth College men reported on June 13, 1917, and after remaining seven days were sent to the familiar old mill at May-en-Multien, where they received the addition of several other ambulance drivers and S.S.U. Sixty-Six became a reality. This was one of the Field Service sections, which, because of the shortage of Fords, was assigned to French ambulances. After a brief training at May they were therefore sent to the French automobile *parc* at Cramaille to get their cars.

The next day we met our *Chef*, William G. Rice, Jr., who had served as a driver in Section One during the earlier days of the war. We also met Lieutenant Fries, our French Lieutenant, and several of the French *sous-officiers*, who were to be our allied companions during the months that were to follow.

It was at Cramaille that Sections Sixty-Seven and Sixty-Eight, haughty in new Fiats of uniform color and

age, passed us while we sat gloomily surveying our mossy and doddering collection of Panhards. The departing Gallic *chauffeurs* boasted that the cars had not been touched in two years, and it was not long ere we believed them. "Danger" and "Innocent," *les bons mécaniciens*, looked over the heirlooms and asked for a release, which was refused, fortunately. After a day or two spent in tying the motors together with twine and wire, we clanked off to the aviation field at Sapony like the Anvil Chorus on parade, where we fell upon a fallen aeroplane like Indians, slicing off souvenirs in true American fashion. In the midst of all this, Halladay and Heywood excited the envy of the Section when they clattered off, tin hats and all, to carry Sixty-Six's first *blessés*.

Finally, after a Fourth-of-July banquet, we received orders to move. We packed up and rolled back north, knowing that at last we were to get into action. All day we skidded in the rain, and at last straggled somehow into the muddy courtyard at Glennes, with its tired *poilus*, stamping horses, and steaming manure-pile to bid us welcome.

### GETTING TO WORK

WORK was soon going smoothly, with Beaurieux as field headquarters. We ran to the *postes* at Moulin Rouge, ruined Oulches, Flandres, and Village Nègre, the latter a bare post on a hill exposed to fire, with the valley at its base pitted with French batteries to draw almost continual shelling from the Boches — a *mauvais coin*, fitted with an old and worn-out set of *brancardiers*.

Our second night in Glennes was signalized by a visit from Boche aviators. Searchlights combed the heavens incessantly, staring vainly for a sight of the invader whose humming motors we heard, punctuated by the metallic *tac-tac-tac* of the French *mitrailleuses*. The crashing became louder, and we huddled under the blankets.

For some days, in addition to the *poste* duty, we worked at the tiresome job of evacuating from the hospital at

## SECTION SIXTY-SIX

---

Beaurieux, standing day and night in line, awaiting the chance to drive a *blessé* to Saint-Gilles or Meurival and stop at Fismes for bread and butter on the way back.

### GAILEY AND HAMILTON KILLED

It was during the last week or so of July that Sixty-Six went through its first ordeal. We all know how it went, and we look back with pride on the part we played during that tense week so full of action and danger and of everything else save regular meals and sleep and comforts. We all know the climax — the price that Gailey and Hamilton paid, killed at their post of duty; and certainly the honor given them by General Niessel at the military funeral will never be forgotten by any member of Sixty-Six. It was the war brought home to us as close as it ever could be.

At last the welcome *repos* came, and off we started for Château-Thierry, where we arrived in a most unmilitary manner, tearing up and down streets in search of a cantonment. At length we were installed in a loft, and the next day saw us all washed, both ourselves and our cars, and exploring the town. But after a most pleasant week there, we had to pull up stakes. We travelled all morning, and the afternoon saw us encamped on the bald top of a hill swept by wind and rain and blistered by the curses heaped upon it. Next morning we splashed down to one of our most pleasant places, the farm of Nesles. Ah! those plums!

True to army custom, just as we were more or less comfortably settled, it was discovered that we were over a line, or under one, or, anyway, where we should not be. So up we packed and tore over to the wallow of Villomé with its knee-deep mud. But we were happily disappointed in Villomé; each one found some redeeming feature there.

It was near Nesle on August 19, 1917, that S.S.U. Sixty-Six lost its old Division and was attached to the 46th Division of Chasseurs of the Tenth Army. We will



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

long remember the inspiring review of the troops on the plateau of Dravegny just before the Division went into the lines. How fortunate the Section was to be connected with such a Division!

On August 23 we packed up and headed back, through heavy dust, to north of the Aisne, where we lived near the village of Cuiry-les-Chaudardes, which boasted only one civilian, a man eighty years old. We immediately plunged into the Aisne, for a bath is doubly sacred in the war zone, and we took up our quarters on the river-bank, living in *abris* and a mule shed. We worked under a forty-eight-hour system here, at the *postes* of Monaco, Auroousseau, and Craonnelle — just under the Chemin des Dames. Brown and Miles had their second car blown to pieces at the last-named *poste*, thus establishing a record, having driven two out of the three cars we had smashed by shell-fire.

And when, in the early autumn of 1917, the American Field Service was taken over by the United States Army and the old Section was split up, we had been together for three months of work and play, living under conditions which best show up what is inside of every one of us. We had had our high times and our low times together, and had joked over most of them; but the spirit which animated us was, in the main, well expressed by Condell, who, speaking of our purpose in France, remarked: "We did not come for money or for fun; we came as volunteers, to do what good we could."

STANLEY B. JONES<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brooklyn, New York; Dartmouth, '18; in the Field Service with Section Sixty-Six; later a Second Lieutenant, U.S. Aviation.

## II

### GAILEY AND HAMILTON

JUST one month from that 29th of June when most of the Section came from the "mill" to the automobile park and first looked on their ambulances and their French comrades, James Wilson Gailey and Perley Raymond Hamilton were killed as they were loading their car with wounded at the *poste de secours* at Village Nègre, a military settlement on an exposed hillside near the shell-ruined village of Vassogne, Aisne.

We had been in this sector of the Chemin des Dames three weeks when the tragedy occurred, working over abominable roads with unreliable cars, and from the 25th of July under heavy fire. That night of the 25th, the worst that our Division had yet encountered, we had our first casualty. While driving along a very dark road through gas, Durbin Rowland was changed in an instant from a driver to a *blessé*. His injury was so serious that he was not able to return to military service. That night every man in the Section did splendid work at a time when few but they were travelling those shell-torn roads, so shell-torn that we had to drive along railway tracks and foot-paths to get past the craters that completely blocked the regular way in several places. The next five days were both busy and terrible. On the morning of the 29th came the death of Gailey and Hamilton, as they were doing their duty with the care, coolness, and the dependability that had distinguished the conduct of every driver during those hours of trial.

These two boys had just loaded their car and were on the point of getting aboard when the fatal "105" fell a few feet from them and wrecked them and their car. A *brancardier* was killed too, and two were wounded, as well as the *blessés* in the car. Hamilton died instantly,

Gailey in a few minutes in the care of the priest of the *poste* whom we all had long admired.

The following day we honored their memory as best we could when we buried their bodies in the military cemetery at Beaurieux, where row after row of French soldiers' graves preceded theirs and row after row have since been added. The ceremony was deeply impressive. Members of the Section bore the two coffins and laid them beside the open grave-trench, covered them with the French and the American flags, and surrounded them with flowers they had picked. In the presence of General Niessel of the Army Corps, General Lancrenon of our Division, Mr. Andrew the head of the Field Service, and many other officers and men, the Chaplain conducted the burial service, while the bang and burst of artillery were blended and contrasted with his words.

General Niessel, commander of the 9th Corps of the French Army, which was at that moment actively engaged in the line, came directly down from the trenches of the Chemin des Dames to honor our dead and the Field Service by his presence and by paying personal tribute to their sacrifice. The guns in the neighboring hills thundered as if in tribute, while the General said in French:

*Gentlemen —*

For myself and on behalf of the 9th Army Corps and of the armies of France, I offer my grateful remembrance to your brave comrades.

James Wilson Gailey and Perley Raymond Hamilton were students, under no obligation whatever to leave their homes, to join our Army, and to go into danger. But as soon as your United States understood that the enemies of humanity could be subdued and confounded only by strength of arms, without waiting the coming of your American Forces, they offered to my country, as you all did, gentlemen, their youth, their heart, their blood.

In these last hard days of fighting the soldiers of France have seen you, each one, going to your perilous duty, always laughing, lively, gay — as you would enter a game. After three years of fighting our troops know how to gauge true courage, and

## SECTION SIXTY-SIX

---

they — all of them — say that you are, as I know you to be, brave men.

The glorious death of your two friends justifies that compliment and that trust. France cannot repay her debt to them, nor can I, but we can express gratitude and salute their memory in offering these *Croix de Guerre* to the two brave men who fell on the field of battle far from their cherished homeland:

### General Order 243.

The General, commanding the 9th Army Corps, mentions in the order of the day the following soldiers:

Perley Raymond Hamilton, volunteer American driver of Section Sixty-Six.

An excellent driver, devoted and courageous, was killed in the accomplishment of his duty, while loading his car with wounded at the *poste de secours* of Vassogne on the 29th of July, 1917, at five o'clock in the morning.

James Wilson Gailey, volunteer American driver of Section Sixty-Six.

During the night of July 25-26, 1917, while evacuating six severely wounded men, found himself blocked in Vassogne by a fallen building and numerous shell-holes. Although the road was being heavily shelled and in spite of the thick gas, he ran to the neighboring *poste* and brought a reserve car into which he transferred his wounded, then evacuated them to the hospital. He was killed the 29th of July, 1917, by a shell which fell squarely upon his ambulance filled with wounded.

Hamilton and Gailey, in the name of the officers and soldiers of the 9th Army Corps, your brothers in arms, I bid you a heartfelt *Adieu!*

General Niessel then laid the *Croix de Guerre* upon the two coffins and pinned it on the persons of three other members of the Section. As we went back to our cars and our *postes*, where our places had been generously taken for the moment by another section, every man's sorrow was mixed with pride that he was carrying on their work and with joy to have been their companions, though for so short a time, in the Great Undertaking.

WILLIAM GORHAM RICE, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Albany, New York; Harvard, B.A. 1914; M.A. 1915; served with Section One of the Field Service from July, 1916, to January, 1917, and with Section Sixty-Six from May, 1917; remained as a First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.



### III

#### LAST ENTRIES FROM HAMILTON'S DIARY

July 9

BOMBARDED again last night by aeroplanes and as yet have n't heard the casualty list. Eight of our men go to the lines this morning for wounded. One ambulance man from another section was killed last night by shell hitting his car. Also six of the wounded he was carrying were killed. Eight men left this afternoon instead of morning, and as my car is out of commission, it had to stay here for repairs. I went over on another ambulance to see the various *postes* and the trip proved very exciting. Shells were bursting everywhere about us, and, except when we were driving, we had orders to stay in the dugouts. We were initiated rather strenuously. The roads up the hills and within the lines were awful. The towns about were masses of ruins and the hills were treeless. Shell-holes everywhere. To-night from the village we saw an attack all along the line.

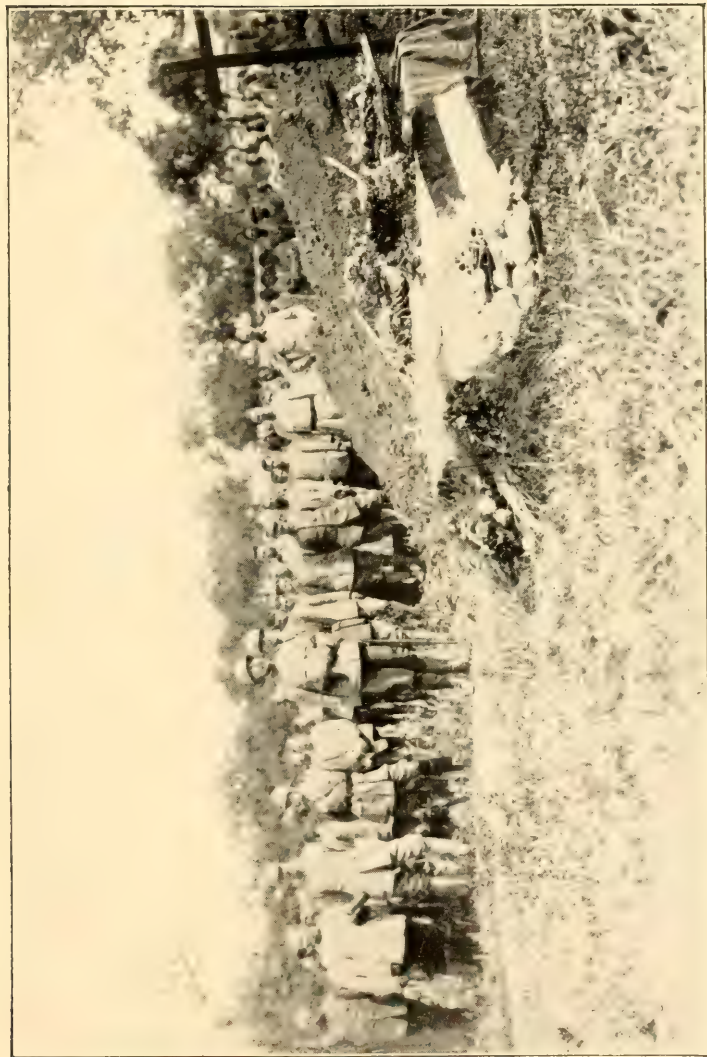
July 16

LAST night quiet and cloudy. Ride over to Beaurieux uninteresting. Spent the night there. Evening walk to an observation post over the third-line trenches gave us a great view of the fighting between trenches of both armies. Awaited call all night to one of the *postes de secours*, but we were n't called. Quiet night at the front here.

July 19

SPENT the night at Glennes and the attacks along the front were furious. Word came in this morning to rush all available cars to the front. Attack lasted all morning. We can't go until our engine is put in order. Mechanics are working as fast as possible with it. Enemy stormed our sector and took three trenches. Heavy casualties on both sides. This afternoon the French counter-attacked and took the three lines and the first line of the enemy in addi-





GENERAL NIESSEL SPEAKING AT THE GRAVE OF HAMILTON AND GAILEY  
IN BEAURRIEUX, JULY 31, 1917



## SECTION SIXTY-SIX

---

tion. Very severe fighting to-night. Large quantities of reinforcements were brought up to-night. It's a French attack, but have not heard results yet. Our ambulances have been working steadily for thirty-six hours, and the men are about all in.

July 20

LAST night was terrible on our men. We are still running after two days without sleep and the prospect is still slight for any relief. Many of our cars have broken down under the strain and that adds to the work. I have relieved Ralph Stoeltzing. Demorest and I are together. Ralph is all in and sick. We will take *poste* duty to-night. Plenty of rain and lots of work on awful roads.

July 21

LAST night we were busy as expected and got in at eight-thirty this morning from evacuation work. Ralph is better to-day and will relieve Demorest. I have been on the road all day and shall be busy right on through the night. Much fighting in our sector now. It promises to be one of the great battles of the war. It will undoubtedly be called the battle of the Chemin des Dames. Late to-night we are still on the jump.

July 22

RAN all night and have had only a few moments now and then for a nap. Am extremely tired and worn out. The fighting has been intense. The enemy has gained a footing near us and his best army is massed to do the job. We carried three enemy *blessés* who were overcome by their own gas attack. They wore the Imperial Guard uniform. Fighting continued all day with successive furious attacks, and all indications point to another night without that much-needed rest.

July 23

AGAIN we ran all night and carried terribly messed-up *blessés*. They say the fighting here to-day down at the first

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

line and back through our sector is worse than the famous Verdun battle. The Colonial divisions are being brought up to throw against the enemy. I am absolutely all in, but still on duty and at this writing am next car out. Got mixed up in an aerial raid last night and one bomb came close enough to shower me with earth. Hope I may be relieved before morning.

*July 24*

WORKED all last night and this morning. Big attack at early hours this morning and French gained two miles of territory. Six hundred wounded were carried by our ambulances. Enemy desperately trying to break our lines here. Attacks are growing in intensity every day in this Craonnelle sector. Every night the French have been sending up big guns and regiment after regiment of fresh troops. Casualties are extremely heavy. I have just been relieved and am ready for a good long sleep. The work has been strenuous. Colored troops have just passed on to the first line which surely means a fierce attack.

*July 25*

HAD a great old rest last night, but feel a little off color to-day. Have been told to rest up for two more days. No aerial raids last night and that helped a lot toward such a sound sleep. Ralph and I slept at telephone post and figured in on night duty there. Ralph was able conveniently to handle all calls. Hot as the dickens to-day. Last night cold and damp. Starting at six-thirty to-night, a tremendous artillery duel is on. Seems to be heavier than I have ever heard before. Many clouds in the sky to-night, so there 'll be no aerial raid.

*July 26*

ONE of the fiercest attacks of the enemy yielded three hundred yards of trenches last night. The officials say it was one of the worst battles of the war. More artillery than at Verdun. The Crown Prince is attacking our sector and is sacrificing thousands upon thousands of men to

## SECTION SIXTY-SIX

---

gain a hill within half a mile of our *poste de secours*. One of our fellows was wounded last night and many are ill from shock. Gill's car was found in the middle of the road with the motor running, but nothing has been heard of him for twelve hours. His driving companion is in the hospital recovering from shock and can't give any information yet, for his mind is cloudy. Great concern is felt among us for Gill.

July 27

SEVERAL missing men have all been found and the Section is again intact. The fighting to-day is very intense, and we have taken back most of the territory lost yesterday. Last night was a very active one, but not so dangerous as the evening before. To-day I am on *poste* duty and have been sent to the Moulin Rouge where the artillery is active this afternoon. Later, went to Flandres and stayed there several hours. The enemy shelled our *poste* continuously, and at night under cover of darkness we left for Beaurieux with wounded. Spent the evening at Beaurieux.

July 28

LAST night we slept at Beaurieux. The moon was clear and the aviators were busy over our heads, last night being the first night since arriving here that I have slept in an *abri*. The bombardment continues heavily along our front and we have held consistently. To-night I am on duty at the various *postes*. Many wounded nowadays.

PERLEY R. HAMILTON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Clinton, Massachusetts; served in Section Sixty-Six of the Field Service from the time of its formation. These extracts are taken from his personal diary. A few hours after this entry, during the night of the 28th, the writer was killed by a shell while on duty at the advanced *poste*.



## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

ON September 9, 1917, S.S.U. Sixty-Six lost its Field Service identity, and became Section Six-Twenty-Three of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. Many men left the Section, but there remained some fifteen to perpetuate its life as it was in the old days when it took up its work on the Chemin des Dames.

The Section was at this time on active service in the Craonne Sector with the 46th Division of Chasseurs. On September 22 it moved to Tannières *en repos*, and then to Port-à-Binson, where it left its old "Panhards" at the automobile park and entrained for Paris to take over the new Fords. Within the next three weeks the Section was again at work in its old Craonne sector, with its admirable new equipment.

Section Six-Twenty-Three was now working with the 61st French Division, and after spending several weeks at Cuiry-les-Chaudardes it moved to Vailly, where it took over the posts of Aizy, Jouy, Allemant, and Montparnasse. *Repos* at Rozières, in which the hardships and rigors of winter were felt perhaps more keenly than at any other time of the Section's existence, was followed by the comforts of Soissons which will always be remembered as the best of cantonments. From January 7, 1918, until June 3 the Section evacuated the *postes* of Crouy and Laffaux, and it was during that period that Lieutenant J. G. B. Campbell was placed in command to take the place of our former *Chef* and Lieutenant, William G. Rice, Jr. On May 27 the great German offensive was launched and for the next five days the Section was put to a most severe test. It worked its *postes* until Soissons was evacuated, and continued with its Division during the entire retreat. Each day the Section retreated as the Germans advanced and followed a route through the towns of Breuil, Saint-Bandry, Cœuvres, Longavesne, Pierrefonds, Taillefontaine, and Vez. At this last station active duty was resumed when the Division went into action at Villers-Cotterets. In recognition of the work done during these trying days the Section received its first citation to the *Corps d'Armée*.

From Villers-Cotterets the 61st Division was sent to the Lorraine sector. It was a beautiful trip from Vez to Baccarat,

## SECTION SIXTY-SIX

---

the Section passing through Meaux, Coulommiers, Troyes, Chaumont, Jussey, and Épinal, and finally reaching its destination in late June, 1918.

At Baccarat the work was exceedingly light and the Section found some difficulty in adjusting itself to this tedious aftermath of its hard work. The months of July and August were spent in this quiet sector, with the towns of Saint-Clément, Badonvillers, Lunéville, and Nancy as theatres of the Section's activities.

In September, 1918, the Section began its long trip from Baccarat back to the active front. Rumors of a great Allied offensive in the Champagne had convinced us that the Section would soon see service in that sector. On September 21 it arrived at Cuperly, northeast of Châlons. The morning of the attack was announced by the rumble of the Allied artillery, and from that time the Section was involved in one of the greatest Allied offensives of the war. As the Germans retreated the Section advanced with the 61st French Division through the towns of Suippes, Souain, Somme-Py, Pauvres, Vouziers, Attigny, Amangne, Poix-Terron, and entered Mézières with the French on the night of November 10, 1918. An enthusiastic welcome was accorded us; flags of the Allied nations were everywhere in evidence, and triumphal arches welcomed the French back to a city which during four years had experienced the hardships of German occupation.

On the night of November 10, 1918, the hospital of Mézières was bombarded by the enemy, and here the Section received its second citation for evacuating the wounded from the hospital under fire.

On November 11 the welcome news of the signing of the Armistice was received with great enthusiasm and celebration and the Section learned that it was to proceed with its Division to the bridgehead of Mayence, Germany.

During the third week of November, 1918, the Section moved by stages along the route of Flize, Sedan, Satchy, Florenville, Rulles, and Arlon, passing through the southern corner of Belgium and arriving in the fourth week of November at Wiltz, Luxembourg.

But at this point orders were received that the 61st Division was not to proceed to Germany, but was soon to be demobilized. In March, 1919, we were separated from our French comrades-in-arms and it was not without a keen sense of regret and sadness that we said good-bye to those men with whom we had been associated for so many months during quiet and exceedingly strenuous circumstances. Then came our trip back into

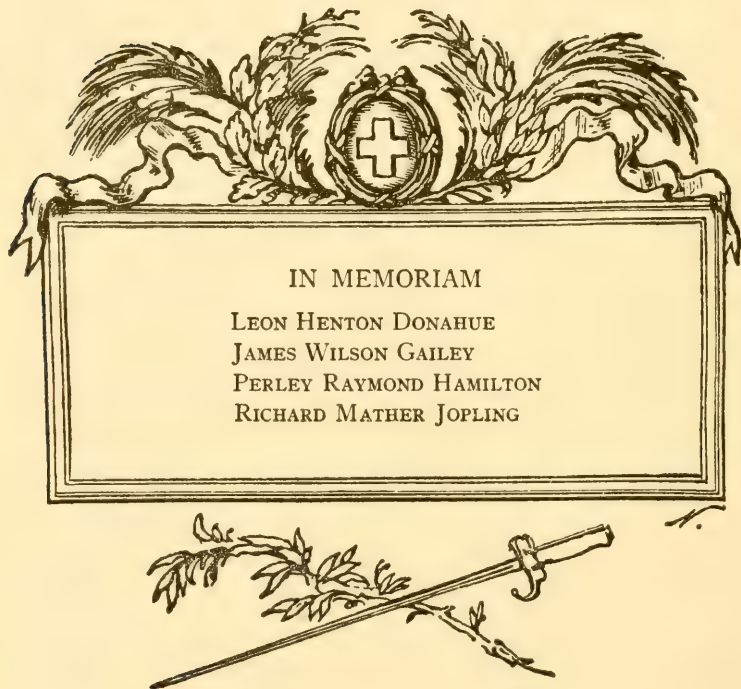
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

France and to the Ambulance Base Camp, where we paused before starting for the States.

WALTER D. CARR <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts; Dartmouth; served in Section Sixty-Six of the Field Service from July, 1917; later a Sergeant first-class, and then a Second Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## *Section Sixty-Seven*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. KENNETH M. REED

II. NORMAN C. NOURSE

## SUMMARY

THE Section left Paris for May-en-Multien on June 19, 1917. On June 29 it left the training-camp, and took over its cars at Cramaille. It then went to Armentières, where, on July 6, an order came to join the 154th Division near Craonne. After two days on the road, with an overnight stop at Châtillon-sur-Marne, it arrived at Glennes, where it commenced work evacuating to base hospitals in the rear, with service at Beau-rieux, Cuiry, Meurival, Fismes, and Romain, Saint-Gilles, and Courlandon. On July 18 it proceeded back from the lines, and on July 29 arrived at Chelles *en repos*. On August 13 it left for the Aisne front, going by Betz, Villers-Cotterets and Ressons-le-Long. On August 22 it was stationed at Villa Albert, in Soissons, with *postes* at Boulloy, Pont Rouge, Neuville, and Montgarni, with reserve *postes* at Chivres, Perrier, and Clamecy. It was enlisted in the U.S. Army on September 4 and became Section Six-Twenty-Four.





## *Section Sixty-Seven*

Look on thy country, look on fertile France,  
And see the cities and the towns defac'd  
By wasting ruin of the cruel foe!

SHAKESPEARE

### I

Two units composed of about twenty men each from Yale and Princeton left Paris on June 19, 1917, for the ambulance camp at May-en-Multien, where, under the agreeable leadership of Camp-Chief Fisher, they learned the fundamentals of French drill and practised driving on the several different types of cars found there. Then, when the opportunity came to take over a French section, these two bodies united to make the total of forty-four men necessary in a Fiat section. On June 29, under the leadership of *Sous-Chef* Robert L. Nourse, S.S.U. Sixty-Seven marched to Crouy-sur-Ourcq to entrain for the front.

At the automobile park at Cramaille, the Section was quartered comfortably in barracks within sound of the guns of the Soissons-Reims sector, where we were joined

by our *Chef*, Lyman C. Hibbard, formerly of Section One; and on July 2 we left for Armentières, the Headquarters of the French section we were to take over. Then, two days later — on the Glorious Fourth — the Section staged an appropriate celebration with a flag-raising in the morning and, in the afternoon, a hotly contested Yale-Princeton baseball game, which fortunately resulted in a tie.

The Section at this time was composed of forty-four Americans, thirteen Frenchmen, twenty Fiat ambulances, a staff car, and a *camionnette*. Second Lieutenant Ouachée, former commander of the French section, retained his position under the new organization, and immediately became popular with all of us, as he was a polished gentleman and a "*bon camarade*." Le Roy Harding and Norman Nourse were our *Sous-Chefs*.

Four days at Armentières were sufficient for the men to become familiar with their cars, so that everything was running in good shape when, late on the night of July 6, the order came to join our Division, the 154th, of the Tenth Army Corps, then in the trenches near Craonne.

An ambulance section on the move is self-sufficient, and the twenty Fiats, packed with everything, from the puppy mascot, "Fixe," to the kitchen stove, set out in the wee small hours to master the rules of convoy. After two days on the road, with an overnight stop at Châtillon-sur-Marne, we arrived at Glennes intact and in practically the same order in which we started.

Our cantonment at Glennes consisted of a double row of tents beautifully camouflaged, with a mud-hole in front in which to park the cars. Here we were introduced to *abri* life and soon became proficient in diving to a dug-out when the Boche planes flew over at night dropping bombs promiscuously.

As the 154th Division had just come out of the trenches on their way to *repos*, we were assigned to general army work, evacuating from *postes de secours* at Beaurieux and Cuiry to the base hospitals in the rear.

## SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

---

The work, although not dangerous, was hard, and called for plenty of night driving in an active sector which had a great number of severely wounded men. A total of eleven out of our twenty cars had to be in service each day, stationed at Beaurieux, Cuiry, Meurival, Fismes, and Romain. The Beaurieux *poste* was by far the most interesting, as it was the first relay between the trenches under Craonne and the hospitals at Glennes, Saint-Gilles, and Courlandon.

To our newly initiated Section every sign of action was welcomed and its importance duly exaggerated. Every shell that came "crumpfing" into the fields around the cantonment was the signal for a mad rush to see what it had done, and the aerial activity never failed to gather a group of star-gazers. So the two busy weeks at Glennes passed very quickly, when on July 18 the orders came for the Section to follow the Division, which was leaving for the rear to parts unknown, *en repos*.

The movement of the troops being necessarily slow, we were forced to follow in easy stages, spending the nights in temporary cantonments such as old châteaux, and barns, or in the cars, which we parked along the road. Our convoys began to get better, and soon we could be counted on to reach camp in the evening with only the *camion* missing.

Leaving Glennes on July 18, as I have just said, we proceeded to Coulonges, thence to Le Charmel and Conigis, where we stayed two days. The cantonment was situated thoughtfully and with malicious intent in a large farmyard, where the central ornament was a combination fountain and drinking-trough.

Our next resting-place was Jouarre, where we stayed from July 21 to 27. Wild rumors of an expected review by many-starred generals had the desired effect, and the cars, parked in perfect alignment behind an eleventh-century cathedral, were polished and shined from spring-bolt to tail-light. Finally, however, the review was abandoned, much to our disgust.

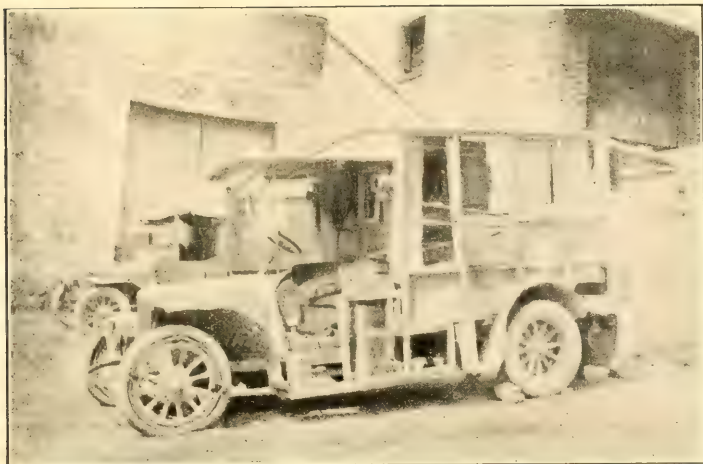
At Trilport, on the banks of the Marne, we parked the cars in the street and recovered from the effects of a dusty convoy by a glorious swim in the river; and just in time, too, for the civil authorities, doubting our ability to swim, put the ban upon it. The children of Trilport surpassed all previous admirers in the art of staring. Grouped in silent wonder along the curb, they attained unheard-of records for the long-distance-standing-stare.

Finally, on July 29 we arrived at Chelles, outside the war zone and within commuting distance of Paris. As we should in all likelihood remain there some time, it was an excellent opportunity for a thorough overhauling of the cars. Clutches were removed, valves ground, and many other minor operations tried, which helped pass the time between arrivals of mail. Then, after pulling many strings in official quarters, we obtained *permissions* for a day in Paris for every one in the Section, going in by groups of three or four. This was an unexpected treat, and the Section owed thanks to the *Médecin Divisionnaire* for this and many other favors. In the meanwhile we lived in hopes that the rumor that we were to be sent to Belgium would be realized. Everything pointed that way, as it was unusual to bring an ambulance section as far back as Chelles unless some long move was contemplated. But, contrary to the "dope," orders came, August 13, to leave the following day for the Aisne front.

The convoy to Betz and Villers-Cotterets differed very slightly in the main from our other convoys, except that the *ennui* had passed and a spirit of eagerness seemed to have taken possession of every one — for we were headed into action again, and this time toward front-line work. At Betz *Chef* Hibbard left for his *permission*, and R. L. Nourse, former *Sous-Chef*, assumed command. At Villers-Cotterets we were fortunate in securing an ideal cantonment in an unused theatre, and the two days there were made doubly agreeable by the discovery of hot baths in town.

On August 17 *Chef* Nourse had the privilege of being





ONE OF SECTION SIXTY-SIX'S BORROWED FRENCH AMBULANCES  
AFTER A BOMBARDMENT



IN VASSOGNE AFTER A NIGHT OF SHELLING





## SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

---

present at a review by General Pétain of the officers of the Division, and we understood that there was some rivalry, which almost reached dissension, between the officers of the Automobile Service and those of the Medical Corps as to which should have "*les américains*."

Ressons-le-Long, where we were from August 18 to August 22, offered the poorest accommodation that we had met so far; but our stay there resulted in a final tuning-up of all the cars. And so ended our month's *repos*, in which we had made a rather extensive tour of a rather large portion of France behind a slowly moving body of troops who completely exhausted the supply of cigarettes in every town that they touched.

The 22d of August saw us getting settled in Villa Albert, a roomy and luxurious château in Soissons, perhaps the best cantonment any ambulance section ever occupied within shell-range of the front. The cars were parked just outside a wall surrounding the grounds which faced the main road to Villers-Cotterets and Paris. The stable near the house served as kitchen, and excellent water facilities made possible a shower bath in the basement. Ten sleeping-rooms, an office, a mess-room, another for the officers' mess, and two bomb-proof cellars, completed this ideal cantonment. Ventilation was furnished by numerous holes in the walls, memories of the day not so long passed when Soissons was under heavier bombardment. We could boast of only half a roof, but a fireplace in nearly every room gave that little touch of home which is so agreeable. Many a pleasant evening was passed before a log fire, and the music of the mandolin, ukulele, and Hawaiian guitar would carry us back to other days and stir up hopes and plans for "*après la guerre*."

Immediately upon arriving, the Section took up its work at the *postes* where a French section had been. These *postes* numbered eight, including a car at the disposal of the *Médecin Divisionnaire*. Four of these — Bouilloy, Pont Rouge, Neuville, and Montgarni — were advanced *postes de secours*, with Chivres, Perrier, and Clamecy as

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

relay *postes*. The evacuation was mostly done to the large hospitals at Soissons and Vauxrot, and the length of the trip and the condition of some of the roads made the work difficult. As before, we adopted the schedule of twenty-four hours on duty with the relief car arriving in the early afternoon. With nine of our twenty cars in service each day, there was very little chance for anybody to complain of idleness.

On August 25 Hibbard returned from his *permission* with the news that he was leaving the Service for the Artillery. It was with regret that we bade *au revoir* to our former *Chef*, who had come to the Section in its infancy and had built it up during its two months of service. Robert L. Nourse was appointed *Chef*, with Le Roy L. Harding as *Sous-Chef*.

Word had now come that the Field Service was being taken over by the United States Government, and that recruiting officers would be at our Section in a few days. On September 4 they arrived, and out of the forty-two men then composing the Section, twenty-eight at once enlisted under the new régime. Of those remaining, three were unsuited physically, and the rest were mainly so young that they wisely decided to await their parents' counsel, or to return to finish their college courses. Later, two of these received approval from home and enlisted. And here ends the history of S.S.U. Sixty-Seven, which under the American Army became Section Six-Twenty-Four.

KENNETH M. REED <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Princeton, '17; served with the Field Service for four months; subsequently a member of the U.S. War Trade Board.

## II

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN was enlisted at Soissons on September 5, 1917, and Robert L. Nourse commissioned as Lieutenant. The Section retained its Headquarters at Soissons until November 9. During this period our work consisted of maintaining three front *postes* on the crest of the Chemin des Dames plateau, and in addition, in evacuating the *H.O.E.* at Vauxrot to the entraining hospitals of Vierzy and Buzancy. Our work during the Fort Malmaison attack of October 23 was purely that of *H.O.E.* evacuation — much to our sorrow.

On November 9 we moved in the train of our Division, the 154th, to Juvigny, ten miles northwest of Soissons. Our *postes* in the Coucy-le-Château sector were rather quiet due to a lull in the fighting. One car, however, was wrecked by shell-fire at the Landricourt *poste* on the Aislette. Clever work on the part of the Section mechanic put this car in rolling order again. There were no *parcs* then, and the parts for it were unobtainable until the following February. It was towed in all convoys until that date.

On November 19 the Cambrai affair brewing in the north drew our Division up as reserves, and with brief halts at Montgobert and Babœuf, near Noyon, we finally encamped in the valley of the Somme at Vaux, west of Saint-Quentin. The Division did not go into the lines here, and on December 20 withdrew *en repos* to the region around Ressons-sur-Matz. Three wintry weeks were spent here. January 10, 1918, we went into the lines south of Saint-Quentin, with Headquarters at Flavyle-Martel. Our *postes* were at Clastres, Le Sablière, and Benay. The latter two were on the ridge overlooking Saint-Quentin. Lieutenant Nourse was badly burned in the face and eyes by mustard gas during our stay here. The sector was taken over by English troops on January 24.

On January 27 the Division came out *en repos* again with Headquarters at Archen, near Roye. On February 8 we watched with wistful eyes the embarkation of the Division for Alsace, while we remained behind, an orphan section. The ruling at that time was that divisions moving long distances, detached their ambulance sections, taking on new ones in the new sectors. On February 9 we took up our abode at

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Berneuil-sur-Aisne, between Compiègne and Soissons, being attached to the French auto *parc* there. No service was done during our stay, and the time was occupied in getting the Ford fleet in good order — something we all, of course, thoroughly hated and escaped from whenever possible.

On March 23 the long-rumored German offensive drew us to Noyon in the service of the army corps. We left Noyon hurriedly under orders at 3 A.M. on the 25th, one jump ahead of the Boches, and moved to Pont l'Évêque, a few kilometres away. The Boches gave us no rest, however, and we moved out of the town that evening just as the German cavalry was entering it. No cars were on service at that time, as our corps was not yet moved up. Camp was made near Ribécourt that night and was abruptly moved again at daylight. The Germans were not so near that time, but it was orders. Permanent camp was made at Bienville, north of Compiègne, and the Section began army corps work again, this time for the 33d *Corps d'Armée*. The work consisted of evacuating the relay dressing-station of Chiry-Ourscamp to the rear railhead hospitals. This station was later removed to Ribécourt.

On May 9 we moved up to Chevincourt, five kilometres to the northward, and were assigned to the 53d Division. The *postes* were at Orval, Carrière-Chaufour, and l'Écouvillon. The Section remained quiet until June 9, when the German offensive between Montdidier and Noyon took place. Four days of highly exciting work followed, during which we had two men wounded and one badly gassed. Two days of the attack were spent in a region constantly deluged with gas, and the shelling during the whole period was quite intense. Excellent leadership on the part of Lieutenant Nourse was responsible for saving the Section many casualties and losses in prisoners.

The attack was over on the 14th, and the 53d Division was withdrawn for rest and reinforcements, and was entrained for an Alsatian sector. The Section followed overland, making one-night stops at Pont Sainte-Maxence, Saint-Germain-les-Couilly, near Meaux, Chaumont, Luxeuil-les-Bains, Rupt-sur-Moselle, to Montreux-le-Château, between Belfort and Altkirch. The 26th of June saw the Section snugly quartered at La Chapelle-sous-Rougemont. The 32d American Division was in a sector here, and our French troops rested behind the lines, three companies only being on duty. Work was light, and the Section had time to lay out a seven-hole golf course for the golf bugs and to organize a baseball team which competed with varying success against the various outfits of the 32d.



## SECTION SIXTY-SEVEN

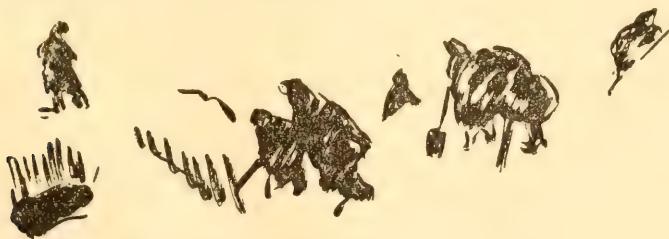
---

The fighting on the Marne in the middle of July demanded additional ambulance sections, and Section Sixty-Seven was ordered from La Chapelle to Lure as a first stage of the journey. The 53d Division remained in its sector. At Lure the traveling orders were cancelled and the Section came to rest at Fauconney, between Luxeuil and Rupt-sur-Moselle. Here we remained, enjoying the picturesque surroundings and the leisure, but impatient to be back at the front, until August 6, when the Section moved to Baccarat in Lorraine, being attached to the 37th American Division. *Postes* were at Montigny, Pexonne, Merviller, Neufmaisons, Saint-Pôle and Trois Sapins. The sector was very quiet save for air raids. The Section was detached September 4 and moved to Nancy. Here it was attached to the *Échelon américain* of Townsend. Quarters were in the *Caserne Dronot*. Another period of inaction followed. The Saint-Mihiel attack occurred during this time, but we had to sit idly by and watch it, never turning a wheel for over a month.

October 10 found us on the road to Meaux, *via* Nancy, Toul, Saint-Dizier, and Sézanne. From there orders took us to Vorges, near Laon, and in country just evacuated the day before. *Corps d'Armée* work was our lot here until the Armistice. After that stays of various length were made at Mont Cornet, Soissons, Fourmies, near the Belgian frontier, Mont Cornet again, and Clermont, north of Paris. Some relief work was done after the Armistice, and the latter half of the period the Section was attached to a battalion of *chasseurs* — a long-cherished ambition, realized only after the Armistice. We left for Paris on March 10, *en route* for home.

NORMAN C. NOURSE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boise, Idaho; Princeton, '18; served in Section Sixty-Seven in Field Service; and later in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service; a subsequently Second Lieutenant, U.S. Sanitary Corps.





*Section Sixty-Eight*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I & II. SIDNEY CLARK DOOLITTLE

## SUMMARY

SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT left Paris on July 27, going to La Ferté-Milon, and thence to the Parc Levecque. On July 6 it arrived at the *H.O.E.* at Bouleuse, where it was engaged in service to Épernay. This evacuation work it continued until September 13, when enlistment began in the U.S. Army. A little later it became Section Six-Twenty-One.



## *Section Sixty-Eight*

Gloire à la France au ciel joyeux,  
Si douce au cœur, si belle aux yeux,  
Soi béni de la Providence! gloire à la France!

PAUL DÉROULÈDE

### I

ON the morning of June 27, 1917, a call was made at the Field Service Headquarters for men to drive gear-shift cars. It happened that there were some forty-two men there who would have risked anything to get somewhere else. These forty-two raised at least forty-two hands when the call was made. Of this number perhaps a half knew the difference between a gear-shift car and a Ford. The other half had but the courage of their convictions. By night-fall all belongings had been packed, the useful things naturally enough being left in storage and the useless things made ready to take along.

About noon of the 28th the train which was carrying these forty-two men and their belongings sighed its way into the station at La Ferté-Milon and the future Section Sixty-Eight dragged itself from the cars. A convoy of *camions* was waiting there for them, into which they piled with much anticipation of a pleasant ride to somewhere; but at the end of the first mile every one was taking his punishment standing, in vain attempt to keep his vari-



ous inner organs from being joggled into a hopeless mess. After twenty-five kilometres of this, the convoy rolled into Parc Levecque, one of the automobile repair *parcs* near the Soissons-Reims front.

It was here at Parc Levecque that the Section received its official number, its French Lieutenant, *Chef*, *Sous-Chef*, and various other decorative and worthy objects. It was here also that the foundation was laid for that collection of *briquets*, canes, and vases which accumulated with the Section's travels. But our stay there was short, as it seemed that the French ambulances which the Section was to have were at a near-by village. So we moved and established ourselves in an aviation camp outside of this village, whence on the morning of July 6, after a week of red tape and of acquiring the manner in which to coax the Fiats to perform, the Section left in convoy for an unknown destination.

There is no need to tell of the ride in convoy, twenty cars following one behind the other, and every driver from the second car to the last damning the one in front for raising so much dust. Most of the things usual to gasoline cars happened, but at six-thirty that night the *H.O.E.* at Bouleuse — the evacuation hospital behind the Aisne front, where we were destined to pass our whole existence while members of the American Field Service — saw twenty ambulances pull into the hospital grounds and forty-two dusty individuals crawl stiffly forth. Inside of five minutes every *blessé* able to walk, crawl, or to be assisted, was on hand to welcome the "*américains*" — and to sell *briquets*.

In a few days the Section was in barracks and taking up the work of evacuation from Bouleuse to Épernay.

This kind of work was not quite the sort that the Section had expected, but the first month got by without much being said. During the second month, however, this means of helping "make the world safe for democracy" began to weary us, and signs of unrest became evident.

Some relieved their feelings by strolling out to take a

## SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT

---

bath, and returning with photographs of Reims Cathedral and bits of the rose window. Others climbed a hill overlooking the city, and by means of binoculars and considerable imagination managed to see a bit of the well-known horrors of war. Neither baseball nor football offered much satisfaction, the opponents always being the same. Poker maintained a fairly steady vogue and served to keep the available supply of money circulating; but no one made a fortune. At that time — late summer — the country was very beautiful, and the grape-pickers in the vineyards along the road would toss bunches of the fruit into our laps as the cars passed by. Épernay itself offered the opportunity of enjoying the usual appetizing French meal, and few were the men who did not return from a trip there distended from gorging themselves with delicious French pastry. Even Boche aeroplanes could come and go without causing more than an apathetic glance. Everybody grew tired of everybody else, and the man who could find something new to “grouch” about was always sure of a large and enthusiastic audience.

Finally, on September 12 came a United States enlistment officer, and on September 13 some sixteen individuals signed up for the thirty odd dollars per month. Shortly after, the welcome news arrived that the Section was to go into Paris, that the enlisted men, together with the necessary other nine men who would be found there, would take out a section of new Field Service ambulances, and that the unenlisted men would be released and be free to go home or to join other services. Thus ended the existence of Section Sixty-Eight. Our duty at the front did not really begin until we were taken over by the United States Army.

SIDNEY CLARK DOOLITTLE <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Utica, New York; Cornell, '18; served in the Field Service with Section Sixty-Eight, and subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

## II

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

THE sixteen men of S.S.U. Sixty-Eight, who enlisted in the U.S. Army on September 13, 1917, were the nucleus of new Section Six-Twenty-One, which was formed at the Field Service Headquarters and endowed with new Field Service cars toward the last of the month. The newly formed Section was attached to the 74th French Infantry Division, and with it reached the front about the 1st of October, 1917. The Division took over a sector to the east of the Chemin des Dames, while the Section served *postes* at Pontavert, La Chapelle, Bouffignereux, Guyencourt, and during the winter, one at Gernicourt. The sector was quiet and the Section was quartered at Vaux-Varennnes not far in the rear, for the first four months. In February the Section moved to Prouilly, near Jonchery for a ten-day *repos*. On returning to the lines, the Division took over a sector still farther to the east; between Berry-au-Bac and Reims, with the *postes* formerly served by old Section Twelve. These were at Cauroy, Cormicy, and Hermonville, with two advanced *postes* between the French first and second lines and located on Route 44, paralleling the Aisne Canal. These two *postes* were known as Maison Bleue and Saint-Georges, respectively. The Section went into camp at Châlons-le-Vergeur.

During the stay in this sector only two events stand out prominently. The first was in retaliation for an unexpected bombardment of a section of the Boche trenches and consisted in the dropping of some thousand gas-shells on Hermonville at a time when it was filled with sleeping soldiers. As a result the Section carried nearly five hundred gas cases out of the town in a day. Shortly after this the Boches took to nightly shelling of the Section's cantonment, finally culminating on the fourth night in a grand display of H.E. and gas, mixed. So the camp was moved to Prouilly!

The Section was enjoying a few days' stay in a château near Limé, south of Braisne, when on the evening of the 26th of May came orders to prepare for action — a great German attack was to be launched at 4.30 A.M. of the 27th. Then followed six days of untiring efforts on the part of Section Six-Twenty-One and of heroic sacrifices and counter-attacks on the part



*Printed for Charles Hoghammer*

### DOWN SHADOWED HILLS AND VALLEYS

"Under what troubled skies your steps have led you, . . .  
Along what shell-torn heights . . .  
When death was near!"





## SECTION SIXTY-EIGHT

---

of the Division, which had been thrown into line north of Soissons. Towns and villages, later made famous by the attack of the 26th Division of the U.S. Army, were abandoned only in the face of overwhelming numbers. Berzy-le-Sec, Billy-sur-Aisne, Soissons, Vierzy, Chaudun, and Vertefeuille, Montgobert, Longpont, Villers-Cotterets, Pernant, Cœuvres, Saint-Pierre-Aigle, and Crépy-en-Valois will long be remembered by Section Six-Twenty-One. Many times the ambulances were the last to leave towns, while some cars crossed the Aisne with the infantry. Two drivers, John Sanford and Frank Conly, were wounded by machine-gun bullets in an encounter with a Boche patrol in Soissons, yet managed to turn their cars and escape. Three others, Ralph Ellinwood, Frederic Lockwood, and William Heckert, were taken prisoners while discharging wounded at the hospital of Mont Notre Dame, south of Braisne. Two more, Arthur Hazeldine and Robert Hatch, were wounded by shell-fire. The Boche shelling was terrific. Their aeroplanes were also much in evidence, either bombing or machine-gunning the roads, continually. Then followed a month of *repos* at Champlatreux, twenty-five kilometres north of Paris. During this time the Section was re-outfitted with cars and clothing, having lost all baggage in the retreat. For this attack the Section was given a divisional citation.

July 1 found the Section at Le Fayel, a tiny village southwest of Compiègne. On the 4th the Section moved to Jonquières where Section One was found to be *en repos*. The Division went into line before Antheuil while the Section established two *postes* in the town of Monchy-Humières and one at the *Ferme Beaumanoir*, outside of Monchy. This front had been but recently formed in a more or less unsuccessful attempt of the Boches to widen the Aisne salient by a drive between Soissons and Montdidier. The shelling was frequent at this time, and Monchy, lying as it did in a hollow, was often filled with gas. On August 11 the French began an attack in this sector, the Division's objective being Lassigny, which was reached in fifteen days. On the 26th the Division was withdrawn and the Section went *en repos* at Rémy. During the attack, *postes* were served at Antheuil, Marqueglise, Margny, Lamotte, Gury, and Plessis-de-Roye. The attack was highly successful, and for its work the Section received another divisional citation. Only one man, Philip L. Bixby, was wounded, although several were gassed.

After a brief rest at Rémy, the Section left in convoy for the Champagne. Passing through Vitry-le-François, Châlons, and Sainte-Ménéhould, camp was made at Coulvagny on Sep-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

tember 6. From Coulvagny the Section was shifted from pillar to post, finally coming to a brief rest at Courtémont on September 25. On the 26th, the 74th Division attacked in the region of Le Main de Massiges and Hill 202. The Section camp was moved to La Neuville-au-Pont on September 30 so as to be on the direct road used in evacuations. By the 15th of October the Boches had fallen back and camp was moved again, to Ville-sur-Tourbe.

The Division came out of lines on October 16, and after six days of rest, so-called, at Courtémont, went back into action on October 30. During the period of rest, the Section was called upon to furnish five cars to act as a reserve for the sections still in line and also answered the calls for cars to evacuate the hospital at Braux. Fortunately for the Section, this next attack was a short one, as by the 3d of November the Boches were in full flight. On November 4 the Division came out of lines and the Section went into camp at Autry. Neither the Division nor Section ever went into action again, as shortly after the attack the Division began a gradual movement to the east, during which time the Armistice was signed. The victory was celebrated by the Section at Vavray-le-Grand, near Vitry-le-François. By the 24th of December the Division had reached the neighborhood of Ensisheim, in German Alsace, where the Section was quartered outside the town in a brick building with hot and cold running water, showers, tubs, steam heat, and electric lights.

February 3, 1919, the Section convoyed over the Vosges Mountains to Arches, a little town fifteen kilometres from Épinal. Here the Division undertook to train a batch of Polish recruits, and upon the demobilization of the greater part of the old Division, it came to be known as the 5th Polish Division.

Orders came on the 20th of March to convoy the cars to Paris, and early in the morning of the third day the Section rolled into the *parc* at Longchamps.

SIDNEY CLARK DOOLITTLE

## *Section Sixty-Nine*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. HENRY B. RIGBY

II. ROBERT RANDOLPH BALL

## SUMMARY

SECTION SIXTY-NINE came into being on July 13, 1917, at May-en-Multien, going to the French *parc* at Saint-Martin-d'Ablois to get the French Fiat cars which were assigned to it. On July 23 it left *via* Saint-Dizier and Bar-le-Duc, for Issoncourt. On September 7 it moved to Glorieux, near Verdun, evacuating to hospitals at Landrecourt, Souilly, Souhesme and Fleury-sur-Aire. From September 14 to 19 it was at Génicourt in the Mouilly sector. Then it was at Mirecourt and Jussécourt *en repos* for eight days, from where it went back to Glorieux on September 13, succeeding Section Sixty-Four at *postes* at Verdun — Vacherauville, Bras, Carrière des Anglais, and La Fourche. It left Glorieux on October 18 to go *en repos* at Chardogne, near Bar-le-Duc, where it was recruited by United States officials. Subsequently it was amalgamated with Section Twenty-Six, the Ford cars of which it took over, becoming Section Six-Thirty-Eight of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Sixty-Nine

O France of the world's desire,  
O France new-lighted by supernal life,  
Wrapt in your battle-flame,  
All nations take a splendor from your name!

EDWIN MARKHAM

### I

#### EVACUATIONS AT BAR-LE-DUC

SECTION SIXTY-NINE came into existence at the Field Service camp near May-en-Multien, July 13, 1917, when forty-four men, with our Lieutenant, André Fraye, left for Saint-Martin-d'Ablois, where we were joined the next day by our *Chef*, Charles Allen Butler, of New York City, who had been the *Sous-Chef* of Section Thirteen. At Saint-Martin twenty Fiat ambulances and a Fiat *camionnette* awaited us which we took over from S.S. Sixty-Nine of the French ambulance service.

The cantonment at Saint-Martin was all that one could desire, and the formative period of our Section passed pleasantly in this little Champagne village, which was the more acceptable because of its proximity to Épernay and Reims. Our red-letter day there was July Fourteenth, which was properly celebrated by French and Americans



alike, with an extraordinarily fine dinner and champagne and cigars, the gift of the French Government.

After ten days in Saint-Martin, days of practice-driving with the Fiats and of necessary inventories of equipment, we left in convoy on July 23 for Saint-Dizier and Bar-le-Duc, *en route* for Issoncourt, in the Verdun sector, where we learned that the Section had been put *en réserve* with the 2d French Army, and where seven weeks of waiting were destined to elapse before it saw active service with a division. In the meanwhile, we learned to excel in French infantry drill of a rudimentary sort. But the cantonment at Issoncourt left much to be desired. Life among the fowl and sheep of the barnyard compared unfavorably with what we had known at Saint-Martin-d'Ablois. However, there was compensation in the fact that we were nearer real war, nearer the ever-booming guns, nearer, in short, to what we had come to France to do, so that the inconveniences of Issoncourt were to some extent mitigated.

The first work of the Section came on the afternoon of Monday, August 20, when we were ordered to evacuate wounded to the large central hospitals of Bar-le-Duc. The big attack at Verdun on the morning of that day had resulted in a tremendous success for the French. The number of *blessés* was large, and fifteen of our ambulances were employed in carrying the *couchés*. Five cars remained at Vadelaincourt, and were present on the night of the 20th, during the Boche air raid there, which so completely destroyed the operating-wards of the hospital and brought death to a number of devoted doctors and nurses. This raid, the main topic of conversation for weeks to come, was a strenuous but fitting introduction to Boche methods and gave us a taste of what lay in store for us.

Issoncourt's proximity to Souilly, the Headquarters of the Second Army, made it a favorite place of visitation for enemy *avions*, and every clear night found the Section safeguarding itself in *caves voutées*, lying down with the sheep in folds secure. Two of these raids, I may add, proved most exciting. But just as we had got accustomed

## SECTION SIXTY-NINE

---

to this sort of thing, the Section moved on September 7 to Glorieux, a half-kilometre from Verdun, where for five days it assisted Section Four in evacuation work from the *triage* at Glorieux to the various hospitals at Landrecourt, Souilly, Souhesme, and Fleury-sur-Aire. The task was difficult, but especially interesting to us as the Section here had its first opportunity to serve as a unit; and our return to Issoncourt, which followed, brought us discontent, for real work had tasted good. But we were destined to remain only four days in Issoncourt, as we were soon attached to the 131st Division of the French army and went in convoy to our new cantonment at Génicourt in the Mouilly sector, where we remained from September 14 to September 19.

The cantonment at Génicourt was only a makeshift, and the nights found most of us on the floor of the *abri*, for hostile *avions* were very numerous. Later we returned to Glorieux and were billeted in the old seminary, where we were most comfortable. While working at the difficult *poste* of La Fourche, five of our cars were pierced with *éclats*, but during the work on the Verdun front no member of the Section met with any serious mishap. Two *Croix de Guerre* were awarded to members of the Section for work done with the Division. The Section left Glorieux on October 18, to go *en repos* with its Division at Chardogne, near Bar-le-Duc, where the United States recruiting officers visited us, and the Section again made an excellent showing — twenty-one men enlisting and the *Chef* getting a commission. On October 20 Lieutenant Butler and the men who had enlisted were moved to Ancemont, where they took over the Ford ambulances of Field Service Section Twenty-Six. The Section became officially Six-Thirty-Eight and continued to serve the French Army until long after the Armistice.

HENRY B. RIGBY <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Mansfield, Ohio; Yale, '15; *Sous-Chef* of Section Sixty-Nine; later Chief of Disbursements, War Registration, and Draft for Ohio for the remainder of the war.

## II

### THE BOMBING OF VADELAINCOURT

August 24, 1917

I SHALL never forget the night of August 20, 1917. We were sent to the evacuation hospital at Vadelaincourt to help take back to the rear the many wounded of the first day's fighting of the great French attack of the day before; and many there were, too. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the hospital; the sun was just setting against a beautiful, clear sky. We had to wait until about nine o'clock, and the night was clear and still. Scarcely any breeze was stirring, but the cannon flashed and thundered continuously on the horizon. Mack and I, our *Chef*, and the drivers of the other two cars were all sitting on a bench just outside the main hospital shack, watching the beautiful star-shells burst in the distance, while now and then two or three powerful searchlights would scan the sky above our heads for enemy craft. We were all enjoying this; and some one jokingly remarked, "Does n't it remind you of a great Fourth-of-July celebration in the United States?" Suddenly the whirr of an aeroplane in motion sounded over our heads. Scarcely had we jumped to our feet when two crashes sounded about a square away from us; and for ten seconds at least everything was aglow and lighted up as bright as day. We all realized instantly what had happened.

There is a large aviation *parc* not far from the hospital. An enemy plane had climbed high into the air on his side of the line, and then shut off his motor and glided down until he came to this *parc*, dropping two incendiary bombs as he passed. It was the explosion of these that we heard and saw. Just as he dropped them he turned on his motor and darted back toward his own lines, amid a shower of

bursting shells from the French anti-aircraft guns. We could see him just a little way above us in the bright glow of the explosion, dashing ahead at a terrific rate.

As soon as this occurred, the *Chef* gave orders to put on our steel helmets, stay near our cars, and to have our gas-masks ready, because a gas-bomb might be dropped. In the meantime our three cars were lined up in front of the main hospital shack. There are about sixty of these long wooden buildings arranged in two rows facing each other.

About ten-thirty we were all inside the shacks looking at some of the many wounded Boche prisoners, when just as one of us was remarking, "I feel sorry for them," we heard the same roar again, and in an instant three crashes hurled showers of earth and missiles upon our hospital, caused every light in the place to go out, and everybody, including ourselves, fell flat on the floor. It was then quite evident that the Germans were trying to hit this hospital, for these three bombs had missed it by only about one hundred feet, landing in a field just behind the hospital where they made three deep pits.

Things were becoming really serious, so the *Chef* told us to look for an *abri*. But alas! before we could do this, six more bombs fell all around us. Then wild excitement followed. Frenchmen were dashing at full speed for an *abri*; and we followed suit. Some fell down in the gutters beside the hospital, some dived under the ambulances. By this time there were several planes above us, and one of their bombs had hit its mark, for the section of the hospital across the road was now a mass of roaring flames, and the whole place was as bright as day. The screams of the wounded were drowned by the crashes of the bombs, and, to add to the horror, the gas-signal was flashed, for the Germans were dropping bombs charged with gas, one whiff of which would finish any one.

We clapped on our masks as did every one else, and it is needless to say we all thought our time had come, for the bombs were now raining in all directions, and the whole village was aglow from the burning hospital. The



miserable aviators had been able to swoop down low and take good aim before letting a bomb fall; so of course the hospital was set on fire. We had to crank our cars and stand by them so as to be ready to rush the wounded away as soon as they could be brought from the burning building. But presently another bomb burst still closer to us, when we were all ordered to fly to an *abri* at once. While Mack and I, along with three French officers, were doing so, we looked up and saw a plane just above us. The bomb beat us; we were still about twenty feet from an *abri*; and just as it burst, we dived under an ambulance near by, the Frenchmen coming down right on our backs. The explosion sent a shower of rocks and earth against and on top of the car; but I am thankful to say that no one was hurt. We did n't wait there for the next one, however. We scrambled out from under the car, and all of us dived into the *abri*, head-on. It was quite a "mix-up" when we hit the bottom; but that was better than a "blow-up," we thought.

After this bomb had fallen, there seemed to be a little lull. So our *Chef* led the way out of the *abri*, and we all hurried back to our cars. The hospital was still burning furiously, but the fire had not reached across the road where we were. The lull was only for a moment; another lot of planes now flashed over our heads strewing incendiary and gas-bombs in all directions. The work was now too serious for us to leave our cars, for the wounded were being rapidly loaded into them; so we stood by, patiently awaiting our finish.

My car was the last one to be loaded; and you can imagine how Mack and I felt when we saw the other two cars load up and pull out, leaving us still there! I confess, however, that I never want to be caught in such a place again; the suspense was a little too much. It seemed to us as if the *brancardiers* took months to load our car, while every moment the flying machines increased in number. Apparently the big anti-aircraft guns were having no effect on them. I never felt so happy in all my life as I did





AMERICAN AMBULANCE AT A DRESSING-STATION NEAR VERDUN

(The driver is Edward Sortwell, killed in Salonica, November 11, 1916,



## SECTION SIXTY-NINE

---

when the signal was given for us to pull out, when we passed right beside the burning buildings and could see many of the poor, helpless wounded trying to drag themselves out of reach of the hungry flames.

As this hospital was filled with seriously wounded patients, none of them had the slightest chance of escaping unless some one helped them, which, of course, everybody tried to do. Strange to say, the majority of cases were Germans, and most of those lost were Boche wounded. Of course, many were killed by the explosion of the bomb and many were lost in the fire. Needless to say, the part of the hospital which was hit was totally destroyed, but the part on the other side of the road was not harmed.

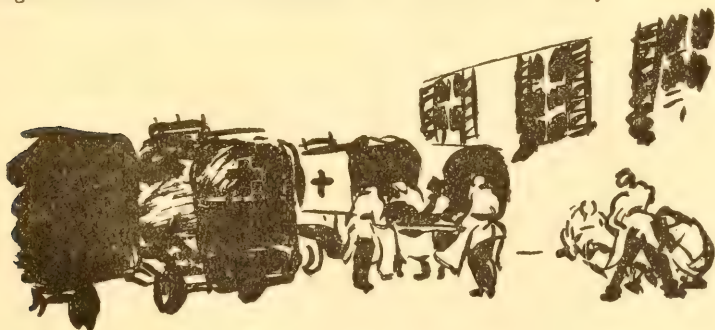
This is another addition to the long brutality list drawn up against the Germans. I may add that the Boches make this kind of addition quite frequently.

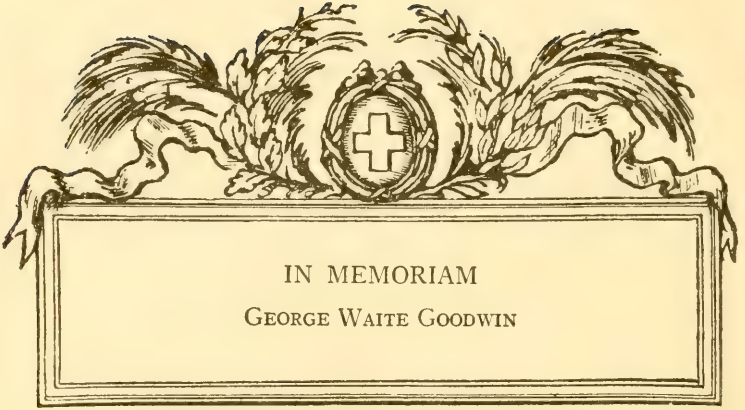
It was four-thirty in the morning when we finally got our ambulance loads of wounded back to the hospital in the rear of the fighting zone and got into our beds.

ROBERT RANDOLPH BALL <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Biltmore, North Carolina; University of Virginia, '17; served in Section Sixty-Nine of the Field Service until October, 1917; subsequently a Second Lieutenant of Artillery in the French Army. The above are extracts from a home letter.

EDITOR'S NOTE. — The subsequent history of the greater part of the personnel of old Section Sixty-Nine is told at the end of Section Twenty-Six's history, as they took over the cars of this Section which became Six-Thirty-Eight of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service with the French Army.





*Section Thirty*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I & II. ALBERT EDWARD MACDOUGALL

III. J. OLIVER BEEBE



## SUMMARY

AFTER a month of inactivity at May-en-Multien, Section Thirty was at last formed, and on the 16th of July, 1917, left Paris for Dugny, near Verdun. From this base it served Vadelaincourt, Chaumont, Monthairon, and other hospitals. On September 4 it left Dugny for Rambluzin, near Benoitte Vaux for *repos*. During the second week in October the Section was moved on flatcars to Blanzey, south of Soissons, where the recruiting officers found it. On October 15, it moved to Vauxrot in the same sector, from there aiding in the Fort Malmaison attack of October 23, and finally moving on October 28 to Saint-Remy, *en repos*. Upon the militarization of the Service the remaining members of Section Thirty were combined with those of old Section Eighteen to form Six-Forty-Two of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Thirty

Verdun! A clarion thy name shall ring  
Adown the ages and the Nations see  
Thy monuments of glory. Now we bring  
Thank-offering and bend the reverent knee,  
Thou star upon the crown of Liberty!

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

### I

#### COMING TO FRANCE — WORK AT DUGNY

THE "Harvard Section" was composed of twenty-five Cambridge graduates and undergraduates, plus a few *aspirants*, and all of us must express our gratitude to Mrs. Henry B. Duryea, whose energetic efforts terminated successfully in raising a sum sufficient to equip the Section with Fords.

On June 2, 1917, we sailed from New York for Bordeaux. During the trip across, Paul Rainey, the lion-hunter, decided to obtain moving pictures of the stern gun in action; so when the gunners went through the usual motions of loading, one of them slipped a shell into the gun while the second was posing, with the result that the latter touched off the firing-pin and the *obus* went skipping past a passing cargo ship. Whereupon the captain gave the gunner two months in prison, the passengers

went back to their books and shuffle-board, and Rainey developed his film.

We spent only a week in Paris and a month at May-en-Multien waiting for the promised "flivvers," when finally on July 16 we took up our work under the wise and kind leadership of Ralph Richmond, formerly of Section Fifteen, and just fresh from the officers' school at Meaux.

Travelling in convoy, we arrived in Châlons for our first night. Here we saw our first Boche prisoners, and caused considerable excitement among the French *poilus* by playing baseball. They rather marvelled at the distance the Americans could throw the ball, and were quite unable to imitate us. The next morning, with sore arms from cranking stiff cars, we got an early start and reached Bar-le-Duc in the forenoon, where every one stocked up with the famous jelly of the town. In repacking some of the cars six months later, we found a few jars of this jelly carefully hidden in the side-boxes where they had been put at that time.

At our Dugny cantonment we were assigned two tents connected with the large evacuation hospital built for the coming attack at Verdun, where we lived in more or less luxury, having electric lights and being able to take shower baths under the water spigots when the military doctors were not about. Wounded did not begin coming in for about ten days, so under the able direction of our first *Sous-Chef*, Bingham, all took turns in stringing barbed wire around the cantonment, putting up an eating-tent, building a cook-shack, and cracking stones for a road for the cars. *Avion* combats, passing troops, and now and then a burning *saucisse* were the only things that looked like war until the heavy artillery began to speak, and wounded poured in. Then the cars started to work, carrying *blessés* to Vadelaincourt, Chaumont, Monthairon, and other hospitals varying distances away.

The most distasteful trip was that to the railway station in our town. The Boches were evidently bent on

## SECTION THIRTY

---

forcing the *ravitaillement* base to move farther back, for they began dropping close to the station "380's" from their naval guns. At first the shells came at weekly intervals — on Sunday mornings; but gradually the intervals grew shorter until at the end of August a certain number were sure to come twice a day. The town soon began to take on a more desolate appearance as the houses here and there commenced to tumble and the few civilians and many soldiers moved out. At the hospital in the centre of the town — to give one example of these changed conditions — seven nurses were one day huddled in an open trench while the shelling lasted, when a misguided shell fell directly on their temporary refuge, killing three of them and wounding the other four. It was our No. 757 that carried to the hospital Mlle. Yolande de Baye, who shortly afterwards was decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honor in recognition of her heroic conduct on this occasion.

During August the average of cars rolling per day was about ten, and at no time did we call on the ten French cars held at the hospital as a reserve for our Section. In the last days of this month shells landed upon the operating-room of Hospital 225 and in consequence the medical authorities decided to evacuate it, which gave our twenty cars a busy two hours. But after this the work gradually slackened up, until at the beginning of September, when our hospital shut its doors, the cars stood idle.

### HOSPITALS BOMBED — A MOVE BY TRAIN

THE last moonlit nights of August were made memorable by the aviation raids about which much appeared in the newspapers. Not only were bombs dropped on over five of the hospitals near Verdun, but the aviators also raked the roads with their machine guns. In consequence of this heartless conduct, two military doctors were killed and four wounded as they worked in the hospital where we were quartered. Other bombs dropped on all sides, but did little damage except tearing holes in our tents and

upturning a few graves in the near-by cemetery. So, after spending several nights in near-by trenches and under haystacks, the fellows received with pleasure the order to move for a three weeks' *repos*, which was spent in the Bois de Chanois at Rambluzin, a typically French village near Benoitte Vaux, noted for its shrine, to which many pilgrimages were made before the war.

Our peaceful existence in these delightful woods was interrupted by the rumors of the nearness of the recruiting commission sent out to take over the Field Service sections. Then came an unexpected order to entrain for an unknown destination. It did not take long to pack and at the appointed hour we were at Ligny-en-Barrois, where our Fords were put atop of flatcars. It was a somewhat perilous trip in a sense, because of the strong temptation to visit your neighbor on the next car while the train was moving along. On the other hand, it was interesting, for a change, to sit inside your ambulance and watch through the window the French scenery. At 2 A.M. the train came to a stop in Villers-Cotterets, where we learned that we had changed from the Fourth to the Sixth Army. Then the heavy French ambulances on the forward part of the train had to be unloaded first, and as there was but one platform on which the cars could be placed it was not until seven that the first Ford was taken off. For this work the Section was divided into squads working in relays: one squad detaching the freight car and pushing it by hand to the platform, another running the ambulance off the car, and the third switching the empty car. It took just an hour and a half to unload and park, ready for the start to Blanzky, where the Section was to be held in reserve for the Tenth Army Corps.

### SOISSONS — THE RECRUITING OFFICERS

It was at Blanzky that the U.S. recruiting commission found us living in our cars and trying to keep dry. The officers, who appeared unexpectedly and in a downpour of rain, sat down in the only room near by which boasted



## SECTION THIRTY

---

a fireplace, and there the Section gathered around to ask questions. But the fact that interested us most in this connection was the official promise that the group should continue to be known as Section Thirty.

About October 15 we moved to Vauxrot, north of Soissons, to do the evacuation work, and were quartered in a barrack in a destroyed distillery. After shovelling bottles for over an hour, we were able to park the cars without losing any tires. There were bottles everywhere — empty ones — and as a further disappointment the proprietor of the place refused to allow old grenades and spent shells to be thrown at the stock!

During the Aisne attack the work was not too heavy. Yet with Section Sixty-Seven, which was with us at this moment, we received the felicitations of the Minister of War for what we did during this October push.

On October 28 we again went *en repos*, this time at Saint-Remy, where the official cantonment was a large farmhouse. But the men preferred to scatter to all parts of the town. Coffee and bread would be served by the Section at seven-thirty, and by eight the various groups would be breakfasting before the open fires on chocolate with omelettes and toast.

Before the breaking-up on November 10, the Section made one more move to Soissons, when its personnel was completed by men from Section Eighteen and the Ambulance Base Camp, when, for just a month thereafter, five cars worked daily from the Central Hospital at Soissons, at the end of which period we were attached to the 22d Division of the Eleventh Army Corps.

From July, 1917, when the Section started out, up to the end of the year, we carried 3773 wounded and 1651 sick cases.

ALBERT EDWARD MACDOUGALL <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Flushing, New York; Harvard, '18; joined the American Field Service in June, 1917, when he became *Sous-Chef* of Section Thirty; subsequently a First Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

## II

### THE WORK OF THE HUNS

*Dugny, August 3, 1917*

YESTERDAY afternoon I took three severely wounded men to the railway station where they were to be shipped farther back for further treatment. One of these chaps — they were peasants between thirty and forty years old — had both legs off, another an arm lost, and the third some shrapnel in his head and chest. They remained lying in my car for about an hour without a murmur, awaiting the arrival of the train, which was late. In the meanwhile a soldier came up and asked me for a cigarette, and we talked as he smoked. He was twenty years old; two brothers had been killed in the war, and his father and mother had been lost, soon after the destruction of his home, in territory over which the Germans swept at the beginning of the war. He is now alone in the world, and rather a bitter soul, to say the least. He was seventeen when the Germans came riding into his home town and took possession of the house. In one room lay a wounded French sergeant who was decidedly in the way of the German officers. One of the latter caught a youngster of thirteen giving the sergeant a cup of water, and knocking this out of his hand, ordered the boy to shoot the sergeant. The boy raised the gun that was thrust into his hands and aimed it at the sergeant as he lay on the straw, but just as he pulled the trigger he twisted the muzzle around so that the bullet pierced the chest of the German lieutenant, who dropped at his feet. The young chap who told me this said that this was a part of what he had witnessed, and gave it as the reason why he no longer took prisoners when the choice came to him. He had played marbles with the boy of thirteen many a time in happier days before the war. Some of my friends here don't believe the story, but I do, he was so evidently sincere, and a man does n't wipe tears from his eyes when joking.

## SECTION THIRTY

---

### MUD AND ARTILLERY

*August 4*

It has rained continuously for several days and you have no idea what mud is until you have run a car through this mud and then tried to wash it off. I came off twenty-four hours' duty at the hospital-church yesterday and then attempted to live up to regulations by washing my car. I ran it down to an open space a little off the main road and near a running brook. The car was caked several inches thick, for it had had several trips the night before, and after two hours' steady scrubbing I tossed aside my worn sponge and gave up the job. Some of the mud did come off, but the brook water had left broad streaks, effectually disguising the car, but not brightening it, and when I finally got it parked in front of our tents, it looked worse than ever. The spigot shower got most of the mud off my slicker and shoes, although it did n't exactly dry them; but a quick change, a cup of coffee, and all was well. And even the war was forgotten when a letter came giving all the news from home.

*August 10*

BY chance I have had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the major in charge of some heavy artillery batteries here, and his officers have taken me over the whole outfit, even showing me the photos, made by aviators, of German trenches and present positions. This evening I took Gardner Emmons back there with me, where I found several more French officers added to the company. We two *conducteurs* — young Americans — sat there as big as life, keeping them amused, while we ate their Breton cakes with jam and drank their tea. Gardner said how much he liked tea and how difficult it had been to find any, so that finally he bore off in triumph a whole can of it, thanks to the kindness of the major, who offered to take us along with him, promising better training than any artillery school can offer; but some

questions as to citizenship and its retention stand in the way. Later, the major, who is a real old soldier and has been in service in all the colonies as an engineer, took me out in his car to see some mined towns and to point out various positions, and then invited me to lunch in his dining-car. We had omelette, roast duck with lettuce and peas, three kinds of wine, and chocolate pudding with baked apples and jam. It would have amused you to see me trying to keep up conversation in French with two captains, a lieutenant, and a major. Much to the amazement of the rest of the crowd here, the old major asked our lieutenants, French and American, and myself, to tea again the next day, and we enjoyed it a lot. I am going to ask father to send him a box of cigars soon, when I am permitted to give his name.

*August 20*

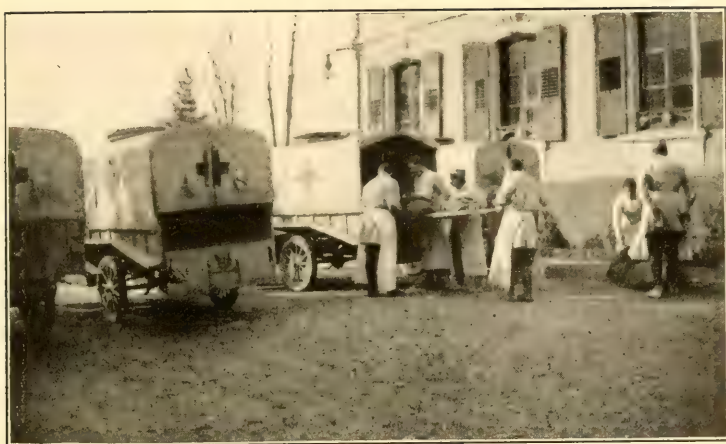
No matter what you say about the horrors of war, there are inspiring sights in connection with it. It is hard to judge what class of men are to be most admired; but the doctors are certainly playing an important and difficult part. It must be a strain on any man to be at top speed day and night performing necessary operations. We bring in frightful cases, yet the doctors work cheerfully and continuously. The sisters of charity and nurses, who come so close to the front and have to work under an occasional shelling, also deserve great praise. As a general reflection, I should say that the French have stood the strain wonderfully and no praise of this nation can be exaggerated.

### THE ATTACK

*August 26*

I HAVE had no time to write this week on account of the attack in this sector, which we had been waiting for ever since we arrived here, knowing that when it did come there would be plenty of work. Last Saturday every car was gone over and finishing-touches put on, for we had been told that the great event would come in the morning;





EVACUATING A HOSPITAL



TRANSFERRING THE WOUNDED TO THE TRAIN





## SECTION THIRTY

---

and sure enough, by eight o'clock the first wounded began to come in, when from then on car after car drew up and was unloaded. The sitting cases were smiling and happy for the most part, glad of a wound to keep them out of it for a time, though many complained that they would only be out for a month or so. But the lying cases were frightful and showed war in its most ghastly aspects. It was our first experience with any number of cases which had had only rough *poste* treatment, and I admit it was sickening. That feeling, however, has gone now, after a week of steady work and seeing such revolting sights so often. The mud from the trenches, of course, made the shattered men lying on the stretchers appear far worse. Most of them seemed to be hurt in the head or about the legs, and were carried into the big tents to a long table, where their wounds were examined hastily and the men assigned to different tents, according to the nature of the wounds. The surgeons soon were busy, performing one operation after another, while a long line of stretchers waited their turn. They stood on their feet doing this difficult work all day and most of the night without a let-up, and have stuck to it. For the most part, no anæsthetics were used. These French soldiers are a brave lot.

It was n't long before all our cars began to roll, taking men from a central tent to hospitals in all directions, the hospital depending on the nature of the case. Fractures, for instance, go to a town which is our longest trip, to make which takes us three hours in daytime. All trips take longer at night because it is difficult to drive without lights and then there is more traffic on the roads. It was something new for the Section to have all the cars rolling; but every one worked hard, and things went well. After the first two days ten cars went on for twenty-four hours, and then the next ten changed off. We keep the cars lined up outside the clearing-house tent and move out in the order in which we come in. During the day every one wants to get a long trip, and is disgusted

when his car stands first and he has to go just about two kilometres to a hospital for very serious cases. At night this does n't hold, because then the strain tells before you get back.

### LOST

WEDNESDAY morning I went on at six and worked all day, getting meals, mostly cold, from one to two hours late. Finished a seventy-kilometre trip at eleven-thirty that night and then lay down on a stretcher in a spare tent to sleep. At twelve-thirty a call came for a little longer trip to two hospitals to which I had never been before; but as we are provided with small maps, I anticipated no trouble finding the hospitals in question. So three *couchés* were loaded in the dark, and off we started. I knew the roads for a quarter of the distance, and so had no trouble in dodging trucks and officers' cars, which fly by at a terrific rate. But it was a different proposition on the strange roads, and the few stars that were out helped but little. You are keyed up to the highest pitch, staring into the darkness ahead of you and trying to keep on your side of the road without getting into the yawning ditches. Fortunately, I had only one man who groaned at the bumps; so it made going a bit easier.

On the crossroads in most of the towns stood sentinels with a dull light; so with their help I found the first hospital and there left two of my wounded. Then I started off again, praying, for the sake of the man in the rear of the car, that I should be able to find the next place without delay. No sooner had I made the first turn out of the town than I met wagon trains coming in the opposite direction. Of all things to pass at night, these wagon trains are the worst, for the horses and mules walk all over the road, in spite of efforts to keep them on their own side. Especially when the train halts the horses turn sideways and the men sit beside the wagons.

I crept on through the next town — most of the houses were shattered by shell-fire and were ghastly at night —

## SECTION THIRTY

---

and finally began to worry about finding my hospital. In the next village I woke a guard who, when he was sufficiently awake, told me that I had passed the town in which the hospital was located. It was discouraging to have to turn back, and I felt sorry for the chap in the car; but it had to be done. I got back to the town in due time, and found the wagons still filing through it, but saw no hospital. So leaving the car in the road with a sentinel, who swore he had never heard of a hospital in that town, I started off on foot to locate it. I ran in one direction and then up the street in an opposite way, afraid at first to go far from the car. About every block I would pound on a door and try to stir up some one; but nothing stirred. In one place some one stuck his head out of a window, cursing at me for flashing a spot-light, because of flying machines. In two houses the voices of women replied to my shouted inquiries; but neither had ever heard of a hospital there. By this time I was hot and about ready to give up, when an officer of a wagon train helped me wake up a truck driver, fast asleep in the bottom of his vehicle, who put on his shoes and started up the road with me in the direction from which I had originally passed through the town, though he had arrived just that evening and was weary, after a forty-eight-hour drive. After walking for five or ten minutes, he stopped and told me to fetch the car, for we were now near a hospital which he had passed as he came in that day; and sure enough, not five hundred yards off, was the hospital I was looking for, totally hidden by trees and its entrance concealed by a wagon train. It stood on my left as I came into the town and I had missed it quite naturally. We now woke up the stretcher-bearers at the hospital and took the wounded man out of my car. He was asleep, and evidently had been so for some time; so all was well. But he finally woke up when he was rolled off the stretcher in order to give it to me. I would do anything for that driver, for to me he is a nameless friend and benefactor.

It was so late now that I decided not to hurry; so I

stopped to drink a thermos bottle of hot black coffee. This was a godsend and helped make the ride back a lot easier. Anyway, you always start home with a breath of relief and a care-free feeling, since you are relieved of your wounded or sick cases. But this particular return trip was a bit different from ordinary ones, for most all the way back I had to pass the same wagon trains which I had met coming. I was now going with them, which is harder, for you have to get into the train somehow, and it's often hard to get out again. For instance, at one place I was held up on a narrow bridge, between two huge carts, for half an hour, while at another spot they were kind enough to move over twenty carts into the field, so that I could get by. It was necessary all the way back to drive with the right hand on the wheel and the left continually blowing the horn. I skinned a few trees and ran over some piles of stones where the road was being mended, but finally got safely back to our *poste* at the hospital, at just 4.30 A.M.

### A *Sous-Chef* — A BIRTHDAY PARTY

August 28

I HAD a trip yesterday afternoon, and a long one it was; but I did n't have to go out during the night. We slept in a spare tent, fully dressed and ready to go out, which ten of the cars did do. It was pouring rain and very cold. No one slept a wink, not because the stretchers were hard, but because one blanket did not keep the cold out. Charlie and I talked part of the night, and now and then got up for coffee. We are on again to-night, but will have some trips so that we shan't think so much about the cold in bed. By the way, up to three or four days ago, we had carried, since August 1, fifteen hundred men. But during the last few days the average has been higher because of the attack. I have been chosen *Sous-Chef*, and certainly appreciate the honor, for I would rather be with this Section than do anything else. I think far more of the



## SECTION THIRTY

---

Service after the hard work we have gone through, and I want to stick to it now. There is something more personal in this branch of the Service than in any other, especially when you help run one of these sections; and I shall now be busier than ever getting into my new job.

*August 29*

LAST night I celebrated my twenty-first birthday by adding knickknacks to the dinner. We had quite a feast, and palatable things which are different from our usual menu make a strong appeal to twenty-five hungry men. Davis, our supply purchaser, helped me out by getting a few things in a large town near by, and then Charlie, Gardner Eminons, and Sammy Wendell aided by peeling potatoes, so that the cook would have time to cook stuffed tomatoes. Well, the first extra was butter, served with the soup, the same kind we have had every night since leaving Paris. With the stuffed tomatoes, potatoes, and meat, we had some of the thermos-kept chocolate, which was a great treat. Then came two bottles of champagne for each table, which was the trump card, of course. To the desert of canned pears were added sweet crackers, candy, and grapes, which rounded out the dinner.

### A BATTERY IN ACTION

ON Thursday all were quite busy, as "155's" kept going for about ten hours. Most of the cars had a call at seven, just before breakfast, to carry gas cases — trench artillerymen affected by a new gas which burns deeply through their uniforms. The acid is sent off after the explosion of the shells. The gas-masks proved ineffectual, as most of the men's eyes were visibly swollen. Then I had a long trip to base hospital for medicines for these cases and got back to our evacuation hospital just in time for two more trips to the town, to which we went in the morning and to the station. On the way to the hospital for gas cases, you have to cross a wide meadow, river, and canal by a narrow bridge, which is just wide enough for a single

wagon, and as there always are wagons just ahead of you, one has to crawl along in low for an interminable length of time, which is tiresome. But Charlie and I found the bridge by which you return empty of trucks, and it was a great relief to rattle along unimpeded.

The next day I had a call from my battery commander to come to his post, as they were about to open up for the first time and wanted a car on hand in case of trouble. Bingham went along with me to see the guns fire, but we did n't expect much work. Right after coffee we hustled along and left the car on the road at one of the entrances to the field, just as the commander had instructed me to do on my first visit. We went through the *camouflage* which hides the road and into the field, where the guns stood uncovered, ready for action, lined up parallel, with ammunition cars directly in rear. The guns were not loaded, as this is about the last step before firing; but the crews were ready and one shell lay on the steel slot waiting to be shoved into the open breech. Two bags of powder in baskets were placed farther back on the gun platform, while another shell hung ready to take the place of number one. Twenty minutes later we were startled to hear the telephonist, in a half-covered dugout beside the gun, repeat the commands to charge the piece, whereupon the crew rushed to position, the fuse was screwed in, the shell shoved far into the breech, the heavy lock swung, the cord attached to the firing-pin, and as the muzzle of the gun swung upwards by the turning of a crank on the side, the crew jumped from the platform and stood beside the ammunition car. All was now ready, and the sergeant stood with raised hand ready, at the word from the telephonist, who listened eagerly for the captain's voice from the field headquarters, to signal to the man holding the firing cord. "*Tirez!*" came the order, the hand dropped, and the man beside the gun pulled the cord with both hands, when, with a loud resounding report and a spurt of flame, the huge gun jumped back about six feet, and the shell sped out on its way, sounding like a locomotive

## SECTION THIRTY

---

drawing heavy Pullmans at break-neck speed; and as the wind took it, you could imagine you heard the train rounding sharp curves until finally no sound could be distinguished. A small ring of white smoke went circling up as the crew jumped forward again to reload, while the three other guns were touched off. It all goes much quicker than this; in fact, you just have time to watch the shell from one gun go toward a white cloud when the next fellow speaks. There is considerable concussion, but you expect something so much worse, that, after No. 1 has spoken, you let your curiosity overcome your standoffishness. The crews race one another in reloading, so that it is seldom more than a couple of minutes before all is ready again. Two men rode on the platform while gun No. 3 was fired, which is quite a feat.

Yesterday, just after breakfast, the Germans started to send "380's" into the town for the first time since our first Sunday here. The whole thing lasted about an hour and a half. Wiswall, Dadmun, and Frenning were on duty and had to make trips, but nothing went amiss. One of them carried two nurses, one a girl of seventeen who had arrived at a hospital in the town the night before. She was very severely wounded and is in a doubtful condition. The other was wounded in the face. They were brave women and deserve all honor. A nurse from Pittsburgh was in the same dugout at the time, and told us the circumstances. Three men in the same dugout were killed outright and were buried this morning.

### THE GERMANS BOMB A HOSPITAL

*Dugny, September 4*

It has become necessary to close the hospitals in this town because of shell-fire, which did not spare them. Ours was the last to empty its wounded, and this was finally accomplished yesterday morning. Of course, this left the plant still here with most of the doctors and nurses and ourselves. So we took off all the cars and prepared to enjoy

our first night of rest, as we thought it would be! It was the first clear, bright night that we have had for two weeks. A full moon lit up the sky and earth, while the flares and flashes from the trenches showed clearly over the ridges in front. It was a glorious sight. We watched it from the bridge for a while, and reluctantly turned in, when I was suddenly awakened by our Lieutenant's voice on the 'phone — "Three cars wanted immediately in front of the operating-tent!" Bombs were falling! Our *Chef* had heard the first ones, and being up, went into the next tent and called out Squibb, Clynch, and Emmons. I got dressed and went out to help them start the cars. It was about midnight and the full moon still lit up our red crosses, so that they could have been seen for a long distance. The German flying-machine was hovering just overhead, while *fusées* and two searchlights were directed up toward him to guide anti-aircraft gun-fire. In the meanwhile two more bombs dropped on the other side of the hospital from us. Two of the cars were now ready; so we started up toward the operating-barracks, when a fallen telephone wire got entangled with both cars, one at a time, causing some delay and bringing some oaths from the drivers. The third car now joined us, and we backed them up ready when the doctors put the stretchers in with the wounded, who had received only first aid. There were five of them — one captain and some non-commissioned officers, who, at the sound of the Boche machine, had come out of their tent to watch it, when a bomb dropped just between their tent and the office twenty feet or so away, with the fatal results just noted. Only two of the cars were needed for these cases, and they soon got off for the nearest hospital still open. We left the other car standing where it was, and stepped into the barracks for another fellow, when the sound of a motor kept coming nearer and nearer and every one fell flat on his face. An open *abri*, a narrow, deep trench in front of us, was soon filled with doctors who popped up now and then from nowhere, producing a rather amusing effect. On the ground



## SECTION THIRTY

---

close by was the huge red cross of crushed stone, showing the Boches that this was a hospital. There we found a small hole, not two feet deep, and two steel helmets, one of which had a clean quarter-inch hole through the lower part. These helmets belonged to the two doctors who had been killed and who had been doing wonderful work. Their loss is consequently a hard one. The red cross was no protection to them, although they have treated Boche and French wounded alike. The head doctor, who had his finger cut by a splinter of one of the bombs, said to us: "The huge crosses of red on the centre tents were also certainly visible on a night like last night." So, though they knew it was a hospital, these abominable Germans deliberately dropped bombs on it — eleven in all. Two dropped just before the large centre tent, riddling it with holes from one end to the other; another took off the end of a tent in the rear; one more passed through the roof of the pharmacy and tore a narrow hole about fifteen feet deep before exploding; while three fell not far from our tents, two across the railroad tracks, and the third in back of us.

We lay down again to sleep at about two, then another call came at four to get a wounded man at a railroad crossing on the other side of the town. So I got up the night man on reserve and went along with him to help find the *blessé*, whom we found in rather bad shape, as it had taken some time to send a message to us, the telephone wire having been cut. We took him to the hospital, and got back at six-thirty in the morning.

The next night was again clear, a moonlit, glorious September night. But every one was prepared this time. Frenchmen about here began filling the dugouts as early as six o'clock. Our crowd waited until after six-thirty supper, and then began to scatter in all directions. Some took blankets and coats and went into the fields to the right, to spend the night. Others camped behind haystacks over beyond the railroad tracks, while more slept in the narrow trenches outside the tent, in which only



three spent the night. But no one was so far away that he could not have been found in a short time if cars were needed. I slept in our tent near the telephone, or rather slept most of the time. Aviators came over and at times got very close to us, but dropped nothing so near as on the previous night. Possibly, seeing that most of the hospital tents were down, they decided that this place had had enough.

### A DINNER — BOCHE PRISONERS

*September 21*

FOR a change of diet, "English" arranged a dinner for Richmond and me in the village at a small cottage where live two old Frenchwomen, who have been shelled from their own district and so have settled down here. You enter by a narrow alley, at the end of which are two doors, one leading into the stable, which is part of the cottage, while the other opens into the main room—kitchen, living- and dining-room all in one. In the centre is a large table with places set and goblets polished brightly, while at one end is an open fireplace with the mantel a foot from the low ceiling. On the hearth a small fire crackled and warmed three-legged pots in which our dinner was cooking. Above the table hung the wooden rack, familiar to these houses, laden with lard and bread. On the sides were suspended pots of every description, and in the corner opposite the stairway leading to the wine-cellar stood a grandfather's clock, which I have no doubt would be highly prized by an American. One of the old women cooked over the fire, while the other talked incessantly about all the noble families who lived near their former residence before the war. She had supplied them with milk, and so knew all there was to be known about their affairs. Finally, when the meal was ready, we found that we had an omelette, green peas, chicken, lettuce, a chocolate pudding with crackers, and, to finish, coffee with cream, which is considered quite a treat and is served in glasses. Persuaded

## SECTION THIRTY

---

by "English," the talkative one dived into the cellar and reappeared with a choice bottle of Burgundy. While at coffee, she suddenly became nervous, running back and forth into an outside room, for she had heard an aviator overhead and knew it to be a Boche. So she packed her belongings in a great handkerchief tied in a huge knot, dumped from a box into her apron the money which they had made selling eggs, beer, etc., to the soldiers, and went into the stable, where she took refuge under the cow, whence she finally came out long enough to allow us to pay for our supper. The bill amounted to five francs each, and it took her at least half an hour to figure it up.

*September 24*

WE have just made an interesting visit to a French prison camp for Germans in a fair-sized town near here. The captain in charge led us along a high barbed-wire fence to a gate guarded by two sentries. It was about noontime in the camp, so the fifteen hundred or more Boches were lined up in a column four wide, facing the large soup pails. The French guards were careful that after the tin mess kits had been once filled, the prisoners did not come back for more. They sat about on the ground eating with apparently much relish their steaming soup with macaroni in it. They get coffee in the morning, and at lunch and at supper a mess kit of this soup, which contains one vegetable. Sometimes when they have been working hard, boxes of "monkey" meat are divided among them. In addition, they are given a liberal allowance of bread. The prisoners seem to be of a low caste, and so probably eat here as well as they would at home. Their cooks are Boche prisoners; so if there is little variety in their food, it is often the fault of their own cooks. These men were of all ages, some very old, others young.

This camp, which is merely an open, bare field enclosed by a high double fence of barbed wire, is a front one, a sort of clearing-house in which the prisoners are gathered, sorted, and sent to the interior where their quarters are

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

far more comfortable. They sleep in barracks, but have neither beds nor blankets. Some are lucky enough to have overcoats of their own, while the rest have ground sheets which they carry over their shoulders all the time. Many a button is missing, many a trouser leg patched, but they are fed, have a place to sleep, and are "out of it," which is more important; so "What more could you ask?" — seems to be their mood. After that we thanked our guides and left, bearing away with us the feeling that the prisoners of war on this side of the lines were being fairly treated.

*Near Soissons, October 1*

THE house we are in belongs to an old lady, who has lived here for sixty-five years and who lets chicken, geese, and a dog run loose in the courtyard; and between them they keep things lively. At first, the dog was as timid as the old lady toward "the Americans"; but they soon got used to us. The old lady now even makes the beds and brings water. Since the war began, she tells us, she has had English, Australian, and French officers of all ranks quartered with her, and as each one wanted his bed made differently, she says she never knows what to do. But now that she has found out that we don't care how she makes the beds, she has become all the more friendly to "those easily pleased Americans."

### A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK

*Vauxrot, October 27* <sup>1</sup>

THE French have made a successful attack here. We worked with a French section, and carried about one-third Boches. It was a revelation to see the way these Boches were treated — with just as much consideration as the French wounded. The stretcher-bearers saw that they got bread and hot soup from the *buffet* and showed no bitterness toward them at all. The stretchers of these Germans were always surrounded by a crowd, including many Americans, questioning them and joking about the



THE COL DE BUSSANG -- THE GATE TO ALSACE RECONQUISE





## SECTION THIRTY

---

Kaiser. All the Americans present naturally came away with Boche helmets, gas-masks, caps, and all sorts of things, much to the amusement of the French doctors. You usually throw all these things away after a couple of days, or when you move, though the gas-masks are worth preserving because of their effectiveness. They are heavy, but well made, and serve their purpose. The stretchers are too heavy and complicated to be useful, and are characteristic of the Boches.

ALBERT EDWARD MACDOUGALL <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are from a personal diary.



### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

At the formation of new Section Six-Forty-Two — Old Thirty as we still liked to call it — *Chef* Richmond immediately became Lieutenant Richmond, *Sous-Chef* MacDougall, First-Sergeant MacDougall, and J. Oliver Beebe, Sergeant. Late November and early December were spent at Soissons, serving the *Hôpital Militaire*. On the 9th the Section went to Chacrise, five miles to the south of Soissons, and was attached to the *22<sup>e</sup> Division d'infanterie*, which consisted of the 19th, 62d, and 118th Regiments and the *35<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'artillerie*. Here were first met M. Petit, real if not nominal, head of the *G.B.D. 22*, and *M. l'Aumonier* Bossuet, the Division Priest, who could boast, but did n't, that every man in the Division was his friend. On the 19th the Section went to Juvigny, north of Soissons, where it remained until the 12th of March, serving *postes* in the sector between Coucy-le-Château and the Vauxaillon-Pinon region.

Leaving here the Section slowly went with the rest of the Division to Lagny, near Paris, supposedly for *repos*, but had scarcely encamped when at 6 P.M. on the 21st of March the *alerte* was received; at midnight orders to move; and at sunrise movement in the direction of the great retreat of the Somme began. Five days and five nights the Division worked, the men almost without equipment or ammunition, and it aided most effectually in the final arrest of the Hun on about the 29th. This was probably the hardest work which the Section was called upon to do, though the costs were much less than in the next retreat. The work done by the Section may be judged by the seven individual citations received by the officers and four men.

From this battle the Division went to the Aisne front, stopping *en route* at Vic-sur-Aisne and Braisne. The Section was stationed April 29th at Œuilly, just north of the Aisne, serving various *postes* on the Chemin des Dames. Here the Section suffered the loss of its much-loved Lieutenant Ralph Richmond, who went to take command of a *parc* and was replaced by Lieutenant Brady.

A comfortable time was spent here during the following weeks of spring. All day the 26th of May nothing went on out

## SECTION THIRTY

---

of the ordinary. The General sent his Chief of Staff to Paris for a twenty-four hour *permission*. Still all continued calm. At six o'clock came the *alerte*. At midnight the *barrage* and the gas, the most intense fire imaginable. At five o'clock the Boches came over, and Section Six-Forty-Two, with what was left of the Division, started the second great retreat, but not until it had left four men, Wright, Thorpe, Al Brook, and Murphy, and eight cars, in the hands of the enemy. Jack Adams was wounded by a shell, which blew in the stone wall of the cantonment at Fismes at noontime, after a morning of most commendable work, James was seriously wounded and captured later in the day; the car he was driving also went to the enemy after not inconsiderable effort had been made to save it. The Section retired, with the Division, through Fismes, Fère-en-Tardenois, and crossed the Marne to be relieved at Condé-en-Brie on the 31st of May, after the remaining eleven cars from the Section had taken the last of the wounded from the hospitals at Château-Thierry — the last transportation in the town before its capture. At Montmirail, where we were next located, the American troops passed us heading for Château-Thierry to stem the tide of invasion.

From June 5 to 14 the Section was *en repos* at Marcilly-sur-Seine. On the 14th, a three-days' convoy was started for Alsace. The Division was assembled at La Thillot and then went in line on the 21st in the Thann-Hartmannsweilerkopf-Col-de-Bussang sector — the *État-Major* going to Wesserling and the Section and the *G.B.D.* to Ranspach. Here a most delightful five weeks of beautiful summer were passed in reconquered Alsace. Only one thing marred the general happiness and that was the incessant changing of speed-bands. Here two of the Section's most-liked and valued men left: "Ed" MacDougall got his commission and took command of S.S.U. Five-Seventy-Four, and "English," *Maréchal des Logis*, was assigned to do liaison work with the American Army. The latter was replaced by Schoeler, long with Old Seventeen.

On September 1 convoy was made by easy stages to Brusson, near Vitry-le-François, where we waited for the expected attack in the Champagne. After the Saint-Mihiel drive, all the high officers of the Division were taken up there in twelve cars to observe the work of the Americans, which was considered to have been carried out in a most remarkable manner.

Then came a slow movement toward the front. On the 25th, definite news of the attack came. On the 26th we were in line at Souain, and at that point took place the first real advance which the Section had enjoyed. It was a delightful sensation,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

particularly for the officers and non-coms, as it was a relief from much of the responsibility which came with the earlier retreats.

September 26 to October 6 was spent in General Gouraud's offensive, with numerous *postes* served in the region of Souain, Somme-Py, Saint-Clément-à-Arnes, Saint-Étienne-à-Arnes, Sainte Marie-à-Py, Ville-sur-Retourne, and Le Ménil. For services during these days the Section was honored by a citation to the order of the *Corps d'Armée*. Also seven more men received individual citations from the Division.

From October 16 to the 27th we were *en repos* at Trepail. From October 27 until November 6 we went back with our Division for a continuation of the Champagne-Ardennes offensive. The Section cantonment was at Dricourt and it served various *postes* in the Attigny-Vouziers sector. It was about this time that Sergeant Beebe was sent away to get his commission and take command of S.S.U. Five-Seventy-Eight. From November 6 to 10 the Section took part in the final rapid advance of the Allies through Tourteron and Bouvellemont, toward the Meuse. November 11 found it *en repos* at Saint-Lambert. November 12 until the 23d it convoyed across Northern France and Belgium *via* Flize, Carignan, and Isel. From November 23 until December 11 it remained at Martelange, in Belgium, and from the latter date until December 27 at Redange, in Luxembourg.

On December 27 and 28 it convoyed back to France and went to Montmédy, where it remained until called into Base Camp on February 18, 1919, preparatory to going home. Here the time was wearily and expectantly passed until March 4, when it went to Brest, *en route* for Camp Dix and demobilization.

Thus briefly ends the glorious history of S.S.U. Six-Forty-Two, *née* Thirty, and few moments, indeed, will ever be forgotten and few of the friendships lost, it is hoped, that were started and made during those memorable months and years.

J. OLIVER BEEBE <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Harvard, '16; served with Section Thirty of the Field Service, and as sergeant of Section Six-Forty-Two; subsequently a Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

## *Section Seventy*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. ROBERT A. DONALDSON

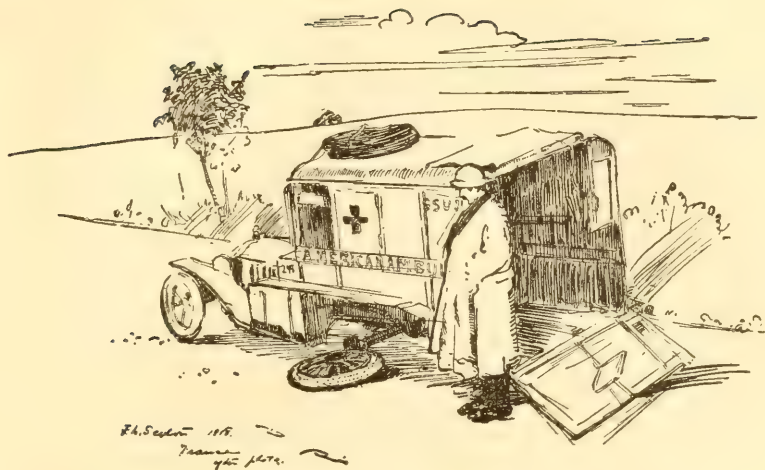
II. ARTHUR J. PUTNAM

III. ROBERT A. DONALDSON



## SUMMARY

SECTION SEVENTY left Paris for May-en-Multien on July 8, 1917, and on July 14 came back to Paris to take over its section of Fiat cars, then at Versailles. On July 16 it left Versailles *en convoi* for Noyon. After a week here it went to Rollot, near Montdidier, *en repos* with the 53d Division. On August 9 it returned to Noyon, and on August 13 was attached to the 38th Colonial Division at Bas-Beaurains. On August 20 it moved with the Division to the Aisne front, being cantoned at Missy-aux-Bois. On August 28 it moved to Sermoise, on the Aisne, and its Division went into line directly in front of Fort Malmaison. The Section served *postes* at Jouy, Aizy, and the *Ferme Hameret*, just under the Chemin des Dames Plateau. Vailly was the reserve *poste*, and Chassemy, and later Cerseuil were the evacuation hospitals. On September 23 it went *en repos* for a week at Écuiry, near Septmonts, back of the Aisne, returning to its old sector and cantonment on October 1. It worked there through the Fort Malmaison attack of October 23 until November 1, when the Fiats were abandoned and the men enlisted in the U.S. Army and took over the Fords of S.S.U. Eighteen, becoming Section Six-Thirty-Six.



## Section Seventy

Des terres d'Alsace aux plaines de la Flandre,  
De la rive du Rhin jusqu'au bord de l'Escaut,  
Autour des trois couleurs qui forment ton drapeau,  
Tes enfants sont debout, France, pour te défendre!

HENRI DE REGNIER

### I

#### CROUY — NOYON — CHEMIN DES DAMES

SECTION SEVENTY was officially formed at May-en-Multien on July 13, 1917, composed at that time of thirty-six men, the larger part of whom were from a Leland Stanford unit which went over in June on the *Rochambeau*. We left Crouy on the morning of July 14, going first to Paris, where we were joined by nine men who had come over on *La Touraine*, and going the next day to Versailles, took over a section of Fiat cars. The Section was under the leadership of Arthur J. Putnam, formerly of Section Nineteen.

On July 16 we left Versailles, and, making a détour of Paris, went out, through Senlis and Compiègne to Noyon. After waiting a week in Noyon we were attached to the 53d Division, then back *en repos* at Rollot, near Montdidier. We stayed with the 53d until August 3, when it

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

left for the front — and left us behind. We were very indignant until the French Automobile Service informed us that under the new “*économiser l'essence*” régime, it was forbidden for an ambulance section to follow its division over a distance of more than two armies — unless some other army had crying need for more ambulances. As the Division was going to Craonne, we were detached. So we again went back to Noyon to wait, and on August 13 were attached to the famous 38th French Colonial Division, then *en repos* near by. We were justly proud of this Division, which comprised the 4th Zouaves, the Colonial *Régiment du Maroc*, the 4th *Mixte*, the 8th *Tirailleurs*, and a detachment of Somalis — regiments already wearing the *fourragères* of the *Croix de Guerre* and *Médaille Militaire*, and to whose famed standards many more decorations were to be added before the war was ended.

On August 20 the Division moved to the Aisne, and shortly thereafter took up positions on the Chemin des Dames. We were cantoned at Sermoise, about ten kilometres east of Soissons, which city we were able to visit often; and when the Division went into line, our *postes* were in Vailly, Aizy, Jouy, and the *Ferme Hameret*.

On September 7 we were visited by United States recruiting officers, who were full of promises. Thirty-six out of the forty-five in the Section enlisted in the newly created U.S. Army Ambulance Service with the French Army, while most of those who did not enlist left, in the latter part of October, for Paris or America, and many of them entered, later, various other branches of the French or American armies.

On September 17 the Section moved back with the Division to Écuiry for a short rest. To Écuiry, too, some of us came back, still *conducteurs pour la France*, after Foch's counter-attack of July 18, 1918 had driven the Germans from the Aisne-Marne salient.

On October 1, 1918, our Division again went into line in its old sector. We gave up the *Ferme Hameret poste* as our Division now occupied a shorter front. One in-

## SECTION SEVENTY

---

teresting change was the moving of the hospital from Chassemy, about seven kilometres from the lines, to Cerseuil, on the hill above Braisne, about eighteen kilometres from the line. German airmen had dropped notes in which it was stated that the Germans intended to shell the district around there and would shell the hospital if it were not moved. The French agreeably moved the hospital farther back and installed in its place a barbed-wire pen for German prisoners! Needless to say, the Germans did not carry out their threat.

On October 17 the artillery bombardment preparatory to the attack began, when it was estimated that 3800 guns were used covering a front of eleven kilometres. At five-fifteen on the morning of the 23d, the infantry advanced, at seven all the ambulances were called out, and the *postes* were soon crowded to overflowing. Most of the wounded who were able to walk went down to a point slightly below Vailly, where they were taken *en masse* by *camions* to the hospital.

The 38th Division came out of line during the night of October 30, and the following morning a decoration of various members of the *Service de Santé* was held at Vailly, in which seven of our members received the *Croix de Guerre*. Then on October 31, Section Seventy was broken up. The Fiats were turned in at the *parc* at Vierzy, and the following day we left for Paris, twenty-four of us to go out and take over old Section Eighteen, eleven to fill in Section Sixteen, and the rest to scatter.

ROBERT A. DONALDSON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Denver, Colorado; Leland Stanford, '17; served in Section Seventy of the Field Service, and continued in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service until the Armistice. Author of *Turmoil*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919, and with Lansing Warren, *En Repos and Elsewhere*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918.

## II

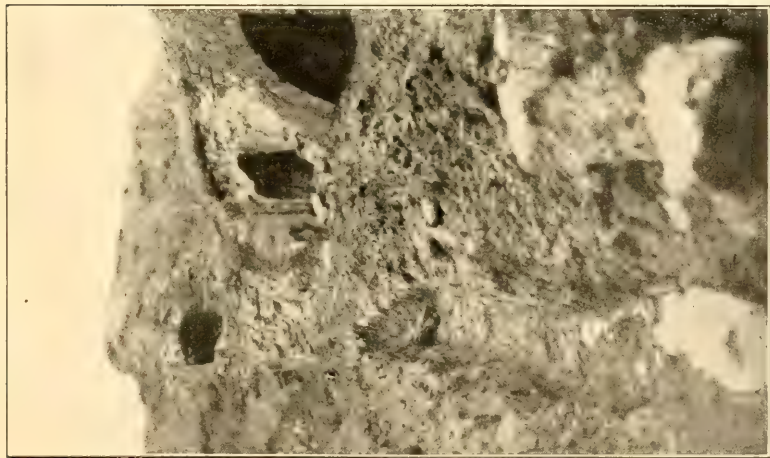
### LIEUTENANT GIBILY

*Sermoise, September 3*

WE have been doing front work now for about a week and have had a good try-out in a very interesting sector. It is a great satisfaction to be doing something at last and our morale has gone up several points since we started in. The fellows take to front work like ducks to water, and if the Fiats only hold out, I am sure that we shall come through with flying colors.

Lieutenant Prévost has been replaced by Lieutenant Gibily, the officer in charge of the French Ambulance section we relieved when we joined the 38th Division. Lieutenant Gibily has been with this Division for over two years and seems to be very well liked by every one who has known him. The fellows like him as much as I do, and, despite the fact that he can hardly speak a word of English, he always manages to have a pleasant word for everybody, and when he can't make himself understood in either French or English, he acts out whatever he has to say in pantomime, which is enough to bring down the house; and best of all, his sense of humor never fails him. Although in civilian life he is connected with a wholesale chemical company, his chief interest in life seems to be nineteenth-century French poetry, and his most vicious boast is that he knows ten thousand lines of verse by heart including all of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. His present aim is to learn English, and before coming to the Section he supplied himself with two second-hand textbooks. The one which he prefers and from which he studies constantly must have been written about the time of Shakespeare or shortly after, and to hear him read off this obsolete English in the most serious way and with an accent all his own, is funny enough. I have been doing my best to help him out, but it is a rather hard job. In order that





FORT MALMAISON!



ARRIVAL OF A "COUCHÉ" FROM THE TRENCHES  
ON A "BROUETTE"



## SECTION SEVENTY

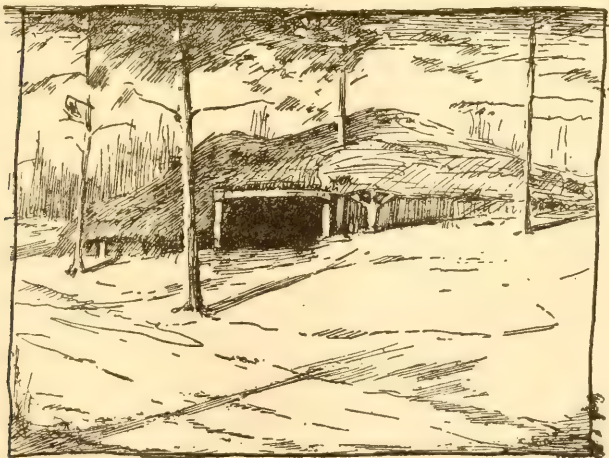
---

you won't get a very one-sided impression of the man, I ought to add that he is a fine-looking chap with a very military manner, has served in both the infantry and artillery early in the war and has been badly wounded in the leg. Also he has been decorated four times.

Sermoise is not a village, but only the remains of one, and lies on the main road between Soissons and Reims. All of the houses have suffered and many have been razed to the ground. Of the church only a part is left standing, and that, with its whitewashed interior laid bare, looks like a great, pale, ruined monument of desolation. The men are quartered, as at Rollot, in barracks just outside the town, and we have two near-by houses, or rather hovels, one for a workshop and another for a kitchen. Gibily and I occupy a little dugout near by, a remnant of the days when Sermoise was much nearer the front than it is now.

ARTHUR J. PUTNAM <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Deposit, New York; Cornell; served in Section Nineteen of the Field Service; *Chef* of S.S.U. Seventy; Lieutenant of Section Eighteen, and of Section Six-Thirty-Six, U.S.A. Ambulance Service, under the Army; later Captain commanding a *Parc*.



### III

#### IN "LA FRANCE RECONQUISE"

*Noyon, July 19, 1917*

THIS town, about ten miles back of the front in a part of France which the French call "*la France reconquise*," was regained last spring during Hindenburg's "strategic retreat." It was in German hands for a long time. Some of the population who did not get away in 1914 remained. A good part of them, however, fled before the German invasion, and only now, in 1917, are they getting back to their homes, their shops, and their little pieces of land. When the Germans left, they took all the gold ornaments out of the cathedral, along with everything else of value they could lay hands on. They had started to take the chimes, but had so much trouble in trying to get the bells down out of the spires that they had to leave them. They had begun, too, boring holes for powder charges in order to blow the place up. But the French cavalry got in here much sooner than the Boches expected; so the latter left in an immense hurry, and had to abandon, just outside the town, a number of cumbersome wagon-loads of stuff which they had stolen. They carried off, however, all men and boys between the ages of sixteen and fifty. What household goods they could n't take with them, they smashed up with axes. All edibles were taken, and the peasants had all their chickens, cows, rabbits, etc., stolen. But the most wanton act of all was the cutting down or encircling of all the orchards. Many of the shade trees, the poplars which line the roads, and the like, were similarly destroyed — a thing which could have no possible military value, particularly when the trees were only encircled and not cut down. All the water was poisoned, and much of it is still unfit to drink. Many of the houses, especially those along the banks of the small stream which runs through the place, were blown

## SECTION SEVENTY

---

up. Innumerable traps were set to kill or maim unsuspecting soldiers or civilians — grenades which exploded when the door was opened, and the like. The worst thing they did was to take off numbers of young girls and women with them when they retreated.

The thing that astounds one the most is the vast amount of underground tunnelling done. Everything from the front-line trenches back seems to be connected by tunnels. In the front lines there are deep dugouts every little way, which go down some twenty feet underground, and are protected by alternate layers of timber and earth on top. There are also very deep special cement dugouts for the storing of munitions. The lines of communication toward the rear are quite as remarkable. The whole network becomes a vast maze, burrowed and tunnelled under, until I should think it would be utterly incomprehensible. Scattered all around between the front lines and the town are very cleverly concealed machine-gun positions, with tunnels leading from them to the trench positions, so that one could go into them without being observed by the enemy.

Lassigny itself is literally burrowed like a prairie-dog town with its labyrinths of *abris* and tunnels. Every cellar has been deepened and reinforced from the top — usually with timbers and rocks of the fallen walls.

One of the most tragic things I have seen in France was a little shop in Lassigny. Although the house had received no direct hit, the roof had been blown open in many places by the force of near-by concussions and the tiles ripped off, while the interior had pretty much disappeared — probably for firewood, and there was left only a crude earth floor. The place had formerly been a little café, and now that the Germans had gone, the woman, who, with her husband, had once run it, had come back to find almost nothing left, not even doors or windows, for long ago they had been smashed out. Her husband and sons were fighting in the army. But, with the fortitude that is French, she had started out to set



up her shop again, even in these miserable surroundings. A few rough army tables and some benches had been procured from somewhere and were set on the bare ground just inside the door. In what was left of one of the rooms Madame had set up a stove. Her barrels of wine and her supplies were placed around inside. She and her sister did the cooking and serving for whoever happened to come that way — ourselves among them. And the remarkable thing was that she could turn out a very good meal. Somehow one would expect persons in this sort of situation to be more or less gloomy or morose. But these poor people, driven from their homes so long ago, are not. They are happy, are glad to be back — satisfied, I suppose, even to be alive. This endurance and bravery of the French women in the face of the most terrible hardships is something splendid. This improvised café, with its rusted, battered sign of a walking rabbit, well punctured with holes, and these women who had come back with willingness and a smile to try to get together and rebuild the work of a lifetime, will always represent to me the essence of the spirit of France.

In the village we met a couple of old *poilus* who insisted on showing us the town, particularly the graveyard, which was on a rise in back of the place. The Germans had strung barbed wire through it, and it being a commanding position, had placed a nest of machine guns there. A number of French shells had also lit there, smashing up a number of the graves. The exhibit, however, was the fact that the Germans had dug into about half the graves and removed the lead linings from the coffins, as they are in great need of lead. Some time just before the war, the Mayor of Lassigny had died and been buried in a vault. The Germans broke into it, chiselled a small hole, about four inches wide and a foot and a half long, in the side of the steel casket, and then reached in and removed the rings from the dead man's fingers. There was no doubt. The telltale hole above the hand spoke louder than words. *Kultur* is a great thing.

## SECTION SEVENTY

---

These same Germans took the statues of all the saints from the church and had put them in a graveyard for German dead, just on the edge of the town back of a large wall. When they left they blew up the church.

. . . . .

### A GENERAL AND A REFUGEE

*Later — Sermoise*

LANCE went over to visit the old castle at Septmonts a couple of days ago, and while in that town he met a bent, old peasant woman who was a refugee from Craonne, where she had continued living, close as it was to the lines, after the German occupation. When the French attacked so terribly there this spring, the Boches were forced to retire, but not until they had rounded up the civilians and herded them out of the place. But somehow in the scramble this old woman got lost and took refuge in a cellar, where she stayed during the bombardment by both sides, being afraid to come out. Finally, the French found her in a deplorable state, and took her back to the *État-Major* of the *Corps d'Armée*, where, she said, the General asked her various facts about the Germans. "And then, monsieur," she said to Lance as the tears streamed down her face, "the General himself took me beside him in his big automobile, drove me all the way down here, and installed me in the home of some of his friends — *moi*, I rode beside the great General all the way!" It was the proudest moment of her life; and it shows, too, the fineness and inherent kindness, even in the littlest things, that is continually encountered in the French, from the most lowly *poilu* up to the highest officer.

. . . . .

### PREPARING FOR THE ATTACK

*Sermoise, October 9*

THIS sector is livening up considerably. The other night a *camion* convoy came up as far as the road between

Aizy and Jouy — a very bad spot, and was engaged in unloading some munitions when a shell came in and wounded two of their fellows, Lamont and Thompson. They apparently did n't know about our *poste*, a few hundred metres away in Aizy, for they sent clear down to the reserve *poste* in Vailly for a car. There was an awful lot of excitement for a while, for about all the news we got was that two Americans, supposedly of our Section, had been wounded. One of the cars went up and brought them back. Lamont was very badly hurt, having had his hand cut off, and was suffering greatly.

New cannon, machine guns, and trench mortars come into the sector every night. The roads are jammed and packed from dark until one and two in the morning with convoys, and driving is terribly hard. At every moment we get held up on the road, and usually at some of the worst spots, such as "Suicide Corner" at Aizy, or the *gendarme poste* at the cross-roads on the hill or down by the railroad track between these two places in the valley. In addition, there is always a fog toward morning, which makes it next to impossible to see anything, and we just have to go groping along yelling, "*à droite!*" hoping we won't bump anything. Artillery caissons often appear very suddenly out of the fog. If we hear anything definitely, which is seldom (for the guns are never entirely still), we give a quick flash with a pocket-light on the left side of the car to show our position.

*Sermoise, Wednesday, October 17*

It is wonderfully fine October weather, with a tinge of cold in the air. The sunshine has broken through and dispelled, little by little, the crisp haze that lay over the land. The sky is intensely blue with great fleecy clouds floating high, and the mud that we have been wallowing in for the past week is fast drying. So we have been living a very enjoyable life — when not on duty at *poste*! Nearly every one has made a purchase of a gasoline vapor stove. At night, in groups of four or five, we take our grub to our

## SECTION SEVENTY

---

cars and eat there, and afterwards toast bread over the stove, get out the jam to go on it, and make chocolate. It is quite warm and comfortable inside with all the doors closed and the stove going; but outside during the past week it has been miserable. We were up to our necks in mud, slippery, without bottom, and ever-present. Nearly every car had to have some aid in pushing when it left, as our parking ground under these trees has become a veritable sea of *boue*. Nobody is sleeping in his car now because of the cold at night, and we only have half a barrack, which makes us very crowded.

This evening the fire of the artillery has greatly increased. The big railway guns and those on the canal boats are all in position. The thunder of the cannon this evening sounded like waves in a high sea running against a rocky shore — long intervals of low, rushing sound, and then heavy, reverberating crashes. All day our barrack has been vibrating and shaking from the rush of sound and volume of air. One is lulled to sleep by the monotonous beating, just as if he were on the seashore.

*Sermoise, October 18*

WOKE up early this morning to hear it raining! More mud, more gloom. The weather cleared a little after noon, and while the low clouds were still wavering, the "sausage balloons" went up, and soon countless aeroplanes appeared. The sky was soon clear and the sun bright, though a fine October haze still rendered indistinct the distant hills. Then, indeed, with the planes to spot for them, did the guns cut loose, filling the air with a continual set of reverberations — punctuated by the medium-sized guns, which boomed dully with a rush of wind, such as one experiences when going through a tunnel on a fast train, and split every now and then by the crashing of the great marine or railway artillery.

About a quarter past five, just after the sun had set behind the hills on this side of the Aisne — although it was still shining with long, slanting rays on the high



plain beyond — we went out on the heights to view the spectacle. The day was indescribably wonderful — the October haze mingling blue with the smoke of a thousand guns and streaking into the dim distance to the wooded hills up beyond the Aisne. At our feet was spread out the ruined village of Sermoise, picturesque and beautiful, the spire of its ruined church rising above it, its gray walls and battered buildings standing out in cameo-like distinctness, and its red roofs — where there were still roofs! — seeming redder than ever in this light. The poplars that line the *Grande Route* were splotched with the yellow of the falling leaves.

Down in the valley of the Aisne and on up the ravines toward the lines the guns flashed everywhere to the accompaniment of the rumble, rising or falling, increasing or subsiding. We could see the great railway guns between Missy-sur-Aisne and Condé firing — first a long red flash, then a great burst of gray smoke, and finally, three or four seconds later, a deafening, thunderous boom that seemed to tear asunder the whole air.

We walked up on the hill with a good pair of field-glasses, in hopes of seeing again the shell-bursts about Fort Malmaison. But it was too dark. However, the bird's-eye view of the whole attack was marvellous — a sea of red flashes below us, red signal rockets occasionally sailing up over the lines, and the interminable pageant of star-shells commencing at dusk. Back of us in the west was the last vestige of a red sunset, with purple clouds above that shaded off into the fading blue sky. In front of us the "sausages" hung with a haze about them that made them look even larger — huge, porpoise-like, calm, their sides bright in high air in the last vestige of sunlight. Then darkness came and still they hung there — huge, monstrous bats above the scene of battle.

It is now late at night, and the artillery still continues its rolling, rushing, surging noise, and the sky is ever lit with the lightning-like, merging flashes of the guns, the flicker of the star-shells.



## SECTION SEVENTY

---

### THE ATTACK ON MALMAISON, OCTOBER 23, 1917

*Sermoise, October 25*

AM back at camp again after fifty-two hours of service at *postes*, with probably not more than twelve or fourteen hours of sleep, snatched at odd intervals, during the whole attack. For the first twenty-four hours the whole Section was "rolling"; then the cars which were on duty the night before the attack were sent back to camp, and as they came up again the rest were relieved. I have just got up this evening after sleeping all afternoon, and feel in fairly good shape.

At eight on the morning of the 23d — the attack began at five — the wounded began to stream down the roads to the *postes* — zouaves, bleeding beneath their hasty bandages, but the proud fire of victory still in their eyes; childish, black, wounded Somalis with uncomprehending pain written in their faces; men with arm wounds helping men with foot wounds; and wounded Frenchmen supporting still more badly wounded Germans, and *vice-versa*. There is a *camaraderie* of suffering that knows no law and no country. All, all came down the roads leading from the front — human wrecks, the jetsam of the battle. The *postes* were crowded to overflowing, and still they came. They staggered in and sat on the fallen stones about the *poste*, their heads in their hands, waiting to be tended and ticketed and sent back; they came in wheel-stretchers from the front, and they came in horse ambulances from the spots where they had fallen in the lines. Frequently they were dead when taken out at the *poste*, and were carried aside to a yard that was used for a morgue. All those who could walk had to do so; had to go farther down until they were picked up by the *camions*. During the morning we could only take *couchés* inside the cars. The *assis* had to crowd outside, on the fenders, on the hoods, anywhere. Several times we took as many as twelve in one car. German and Frenchman went alike — all according to the seriousness of the wounds.

In addition to this the roads were frequently packed with lines of gray, haggard prisoners — hundreds of them. The first bunch that came down the doctors grabbed and put to work to help the tired *brancardiers*, and from then on they loaded all our cars. They soon "caught on," and worked willingly and well. The *postes* overflowed and the doctors were tired and overworked and half-sick from the strain of the days before the attack. The ambulances were backed up, filled, and immediately left, and others soon rolled up to take their places. The road to the hospital was like a section convoy. You passed countless ambulances coming and going in an almost steady line. The hospital at Cerseuil was soon overcrowded. The traffic got jammed; there was a line of ambulances half a mile long waiting to unload; and often you had to wait an hour before you could get through the mess. It was a struggle to get stretchers, and all of them were bloody and uncleaned.

The first day we kept going without tiring at all, sustained by the excitement of the affair, the wounded streaming back on the roads, the prisoners, and the continual roar of the guns about us. Such excitement keys you up to such a point that you don't care what happens; somehow your fear is lost; you scarcely duck when shells come over — a thing that is almost involuntary in ordinary times. If I should be killed, I would want to be killed at a time like this, when your heart is full to the overflowing, your nerves keyed up to the limit, when victory and excitement are in the air, when the suffering of others would make you count your own as nothing, and sacrifice would seem a privilege.

Toward the end of the second day we were about all in, and all the fellows who were on duty before the attack began were sent back for rest. The principal reason we had been kept going was because Pierre, our cook, came up to the front with a camp stove, a coffee boiler, and the canned food, and worked day and night, with the aid of the cognac supply, and served us something hot every



*Painted at the front by Victor White, S.S.C. 1*

AN AMBULANCE "POSTE" AT CAPY-SUR-SOMME



## SECTION SEVENTY

---

time we rolled in. He fell asleep against his stove once, but was shortly awakened when the wood under him smouldered and caught fire. "Bluebeard," the mechanic, put him out with the water bucket. He has been quite funny the whole time, and continually called out to himself: "*En avant toujours, Pierre!*"

By the way, toward the end of the attack the *Médecin Chef* at Jouy got disgusted with the French ambulances, and sent down word for them to send up no more as long as there were any American ones — which we considered quite a compliment.

Sermoise, October 27

YESTERDAY was my birthday, and I celebrated by going up to Fort Malmaison. It was a gray day. The ground around the lines and in No Man's Land is nothing but a series of overlapping shell-holes — a waste. It looks, as far as the eye can see, as if it had been turned over time and again by a giant plough. The German first lines are so battered that it is almost impossible to tell them from the surrounding terrain. Nothing is left of the barbed wire save torn and buried tangles here and there. There is not a vestige of the Chemin des Dames. In fact to walk at all you have to pick your way along the ridges of overturned earth between the overlapping shell-holes. The world on this plateau, as far as the eye can reach, is nothing but chaos. The marvel is how the attacking troops themselves ever advanced over it.

An amusing incident occurred to-day with Davis as principal actor. He was going up to Fort Malmaison for a visit when he ran into the General of the Army, General Maistre, who was in charge of the attack, and his staff. One of the staff came over to him and asked him the inevitable "*Anglais?*" "*Américain,*" he replied. At this General Maistre burst forth in praise and rushed over and shook Davis by the hand, saying something which had the general trend of "*Américain — conducteur*"



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

*d'ambulance — très bon — bon service — toujours au front,"*  
— I suppose adding the usual line about "*méfiance de danger — beaucoup de bombardement — sang-froid — admiration de tous — postes avancées très encombrées."*

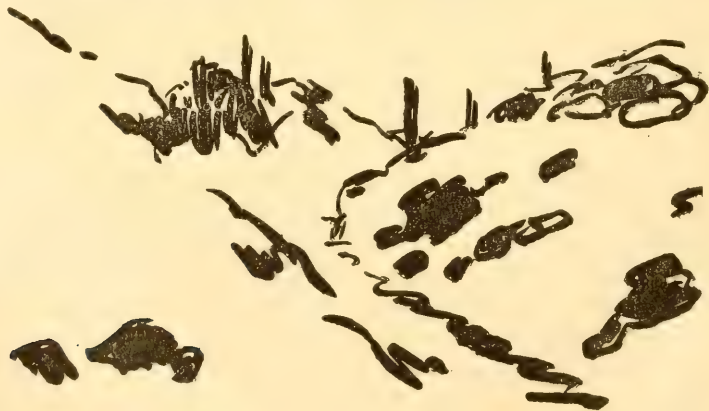
Vierzy, October 30

THIS has been a day of full hearts! In the first place, the Section is disbanded, and we have moved up here to Vierzy to the *parc*, where we have turned in our Fiat *voitures*. To-morrow we are to go to Paris, where the Section will be broken up, part of us taking over Section Eighteen, the rest going to Section Sixteen, and the others who did not join the Army scattering to the four winds.

ROBERT A. DONALDSON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above are extracts from an unpublished diary.

NOTE. — When the U.S.A. Ambulance Service took over the Field Service sections, Section Seventy, which up to this time had used ambulances loaned by the French Army, was disintegrated. The officers and twenty-four men of the Section were transferred to the Field Service cars of old Section Eighteen, which a little later was renumbered Six-Thirty-Six. Eleven members of the original Section Seventy were attached to Field Service Section Sixteen, which became, under the U.S. Army, Section Six-Thirty-Four.







## *Section Thirty-One*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. KENT DUNLAP HAGLER

II. C. C. BATTERSHELL

III. GORDON F. L. ROGERS

## SUMMARY

SECTION THIRTY-ONE left the training-camp at May-en-Multien July 24, 1917, and after getting their cars in Paris, proceeded *via* Vitry-le-François to Bar-le-Duc. After a few days it left there for the little village of Erize-la-Petite on the road to Verdun. Here the Section was attached to a division, and on August 10 left for Récicourt, which village was its base during the Verdun attack. Postes were served in the sector of the Bois d'Avocourt and Hill 304. The Section was relieved on August 18, and went back to Erize. On September 13 it was attached to the 14th Division, and shortly afterward enlisted in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service, becoming Section Six-Forty-Three.





## *Section Thirty-One*

What calls to the heart, and the heart has heard,  
Speaks, and the soul has obeyed the word,  
Summons, and all the years advance,  
And the world goes forward with France — with France?  
Who called?

“The Flags of France!”

GRACE E. CHANNING

### I

## MAY-EN-MULTIEN TO BAR-LE-DUC

SECTION THIRTY-ONE began unceremoniously on July 24, 1917, with the publication of the list of drivers who had been receiving instruction at the old mill of May-en-Multien. The following morning the Section left the mill for Paris, to take out the Ford ambulances which had been donated to the Service by generous members of the New York Cotton Exchange. Here we first met *Chef* C. C. Battershell, an old Section Thirteen man. Another day was spent in adding final equipment to the cars, and on the morning of July 27 the Section left for Bar-le-Duc and “points north.” Finally, on July 31, we left Bar-le-Duc for Erize-la-Petite to await assignment to a Division.

ERIZE-LA-PETITE is a little village of some thirty ex-houses strung out along the “Sacred Way” to Verdun, about twenty kilometres north of Bar-le-Duc, and which received its share of “strafing” during the Battle of the

Marne. Here the fellows found quarters in one of the less damaged barns, which proved to be an entomologist's paradise. Here we waited for twelve days, bathing, playing ball, putting a final polish on the cars, and watching the "Broadway and 34th Street" traffic flow through the little town.

This traffic in itself deserves a word in passing. Just north of Erize the great highway begins to branch out into the various roads leading to the Verdun front. Through the town runs the main road from Bar over which the greater part of the troops and supplies going to Verdun passed. It was the privilege of the Section to observe this road for many days before the fall attack of 1917, when cannon of every calibre, from the tiny trench "37's" to the huge eight-wheeled "220" mortars, cavalry, engineers, pontoons, artillery, ambulances, *ravitaillement*, *mitrailleuses*, passed by, singly or in convoy — a steady stream of every conceivable means of conveyance from Rolls-Royces to donkeys. But these were only incidental to the real traffic of the road — the endless lines of troop-laden *camions* pressing forward or coming back. And "endless" is no idle figure, for during days after days they passed in double line, a *camion* every fifteen yards, twenty-five men to the machine, hour in, hour out, soldiers all gray with mud or dust, sometimes singing and sometimes grave, but with an ever-ready greeting for "*les américains*," if any of our fellows were in sight.

At first this greeting was returned as regularly as it was given; but after a few hours one's very arm became tired, and finally we only watched the trains with half-indifference, on the lookout for refugees, "75's" or what-not, that might be sandwiched in between the trucks. Lessening of interest in the *camions* or their contents, however, was somewhat replaced by the sobering — rather, even depressing — effect of watching what seemed like half the men of the world on their way to battle, or of being awakened for a moment late at night or in the early dawn and to hear still the swish and rush of the

## SECTION THIRTY-ONE

---

passing camion trains, regular as the waves on a lonely shore. It gave one for the first time some appreciation of the immensity of the war.

A little later was confirmed the rumor, to which the immense traffic lent weight, that a general attack was forthcoming on the whole Verdun front. It was with the greatest delight that the Section learned of its attachment to the 25th Division to do front work during this event. So on the evening of August 10 the men were put through a rigid gas-mask inspection, received final instructions, and early the following morning we started to join the troops holding the trenches in the Verdun sector in front of Avocourt and to the left of Hill 304.

Quarters were first found in a military barracks at Ville-sur-Cousances well beyond the range of fire; but that the *postes* might be more accessible, it was deemed advisable later in the day to move forward to Récicourt where the fellows were housed in an *abri* — an old wine cellar — protection necessitated by the daily shelling which the Germans accorded the town. Here the Section remained as long as it was with the 25th Division.

### RÉCICOURT — BOIS D'AVOCOURT — HILL 304

THE *postes* which were served during the preparation for the attack were all in the Bois d'Avocourt which covered the rolling ground before Récicourt and served to conceal the largest part of the artillery of both the Avocourt and Hill 304 sectors of the line. As far out in these woods as it was possible for a car to remain with reasonable safety was "Poste 2," where two cars waited for *blessés*, the greater part of whom were carried from here, or, on a call, from the other forward *postes*. These were "P. J. Gauche," forward and to the left of "P. 2," and "P. J. Droit" and "P. 3" to the right, which were too "warm" and too scantily protected at that time to warrant a car remaining longer than was just necessary for loading the wounded. These four *postes* spread out fanlike in front of a fifth, "P. 4," which, though somewhat to the rear

and primarily intended as a station for the relief cars of the outposts, nevertheless furnished an appreciable number of wounded engineers and artillerymen. All of these *blessés* were evacuated to the *triage* at Brocourt.

The roads connecting the various *postes*, despite the constant reparation of shell-holes and clearance of fallen trees and wagon *débris*, were very bad, and, what was worse, were quite black at night. If there was any moon, it was always hidden by clouds — and overhanging trees, which lined almost the whole of the way, and shrouded the major part of any illumination furnished by the star-shells or constant cannonading. Furthermore, during the first few days, through lack of familiarity with both the French language and the route, there was an epidemic of lost roads. One car spent a heated two hours wandering through the Bois-de-Hesse, while another, in broad daylight, ran past the *poste* at "*P. J. Gauche*" and almost succeeded in reaching the trenches before it was stopped by some astonished officers. Nor did our troubles stop here; for later, even when the men became better acquainted with the route, the cars, as soon as it was dark, seemed to develop an uncanny magnetic attraction for ditches or ammunition wagons, of which there were legions.

### GAS AND MISFORTUNES

THE cars served the *postes* without serious misfortune until the French bombardment reached its height on the evening of August 13. Until then the German reply had been rather haphazard and desultory, but at about seven o'clock the Boches began a more concerted attack inaugurated by an extremely heavy general high-explosive fire which continued until about ten-thirty. Then came a rain of gas-shells, which did not abate until well past midnight and which was followed in turn by a second salvo of high explosives. The night was rainless and fairly calm, so that the heavy, poisonous gases, "mustard," "chocolate," chlorine, and a new gas which burned the



## SECTION THIRTY-ONE

---

flesh, clung close to the trees and underbrush and settled in dense fogs in the little valleys between the low hills over the whole of the Bois d'Avocourt. The French cannon were almost silenced that night; but morning brought some relief in the form of a light breeze, and the batteries gradually reopened fire, to continue the preparation for the attack which turned out so successfully.

But that gas attack spelt the nemesis of the service of Section Thirty-One with the 25th Division. Mills and Loomis had been on call at the outpost during the evening and at eleven o'clock were both sent to "*P. J. Droit*" for some wounded engineers. When the *blessés* had been found, both of our men started for the *triage*; but in the meantime, at a crossroads in one of the little valleys between the outposts and "*P. 4*," an ammunition wagon train had been smashed during the high-explosive fire earlier in the evening, blocking the road with *débris*, and before the way could be cleared, the gas attack began, when the drivers of the *ravitaillement* and ammunition wagons, forced to cut loose their horses and find what shelter they could, blocked the road until daylight. Into this mess ran Mills and Loomis with their *blessés*, Mills badly damaging his car in the dark before he could discover the heaped-up wagons and dead animals. As soon as they had determined the extent of the blockade and being unacquainted with any road by which it might be circumvented, they decided to find shelter for their *blessés* and if possible send for relief. They discovered an artillery *abri* for the wounded, but could find no means of communication either to "*P. 4*" or to Récicourt and so remained until morning with their men. After waiting until past midnight without word, the *Chef* had a presentiment that the outpost drivers might be in difficulty, and so decided to investigate with the aid of the relief cars at "*P. 4*." But it proving impossible to find a way about in the heavy gas fog, to say nothing of assisting a possible damaged car beyond, the squad returned to "*P. 4*" to await daylight.



Meanwhile at Récicourt a call for special cars came by telephone from the outposts. Bingham had returned earlier in the evening from a call a little beyond "P. 4" with a report of the extent of the gas, and so, uninformed of the seriousness of the obstruction, though cognizant of the general condition of the road, *Sous-Chef* Mueller organized a squad of five cars, to answer this special call. When, however, this squad reached the blockade, they too realized the hopelessness of the situation, and while the men did finally succeed in climbing over the dead horses and wagon *débris*, leaving the cars behind, the gas was so bad that they, too, before they could return, were forced to seek shelter in an *abri*. At daybreak the squad, by using an artillery road to circumvent the obstruction, succeeded in bringing all of the wounded, unharmed, to the *triage*. By nine o'clock that morning the engineers had cleared a way, regular runs were reëstablished, and we were congratulating ourselves on our singular good fortune, for apparently the drivers on service the previous night had escaped unharmed, when during the afternoon they began to suffer extreme nausea, cramps, and flesh burns, and by evening were quite ill. In fact, over half the Section was thrown out of service, and despite the assistance of Section Seventeen and lessening of the work the following day, the men were too exhausted or ill to carry on much longer; so on August 17 Lieutenant Maillard asked that the Section be relieved.

The following morning another section arrived as relief and Section Thirty-One returned to Erize-la-Petite for an indefinite *repos*. During the afternoon Dr. Gluge very kindly came down from the hospital at Chaumont to give the men an examination, and while he pronounced their condition serious, he said that with attention all would successfully recover without harmful after-effects. Six men were ordered to the hospital, while the remaining sick, who were not so badly affected, reported for daily treatment only; and at the end of two weeks all but two were on their feet again.

## SECTION THIRTY-ONE

---

### EN REPOS AGAIN

IN the meantime we learned of the fall to the French of Avocourt, Hill 394, Hill 344, and the resistance of the impregnable Mort Homme, and during the following week the "Sacred Way" was again crowded with traffic; but now the *camions* were full of prisoners and the returning victorious French, ever joyous, and loaded with *souvenirs* of the attack.

Time dragged in Erize for a while, but the men recuperating in a splendid manner, soon the old ball games, trips to Bar or Rembercourt, or lazy observances of the traffic, became the order of the day. Twice Boche *avions* attempted to bomb Bar-le-Duc, and on August 26 did bomb a near-by camp of Bulgarian road-menders and even honored little Erize with a machine-gun fusillade. But aside from these diversions, little disturbed the calm until September 13, when the Section learned that it had been attached to the 14th Division, which it was later to serve at Mort Homme. The following day we moved to Condé to join this Division, which was *en repos* there and in adjacent villages. Splendid quarters were found in an old hospital barracks, and here the men stayed until October 4, evacuating *malades* to Bar-le-Duc, which was later so successfully bombed. Life there was very pleasant, indeed, as the Division was most hospitable and courteous in its reception of us. The men off service were frequently invited to participate in the hand-grenade or machine-gun practice of the various companies or to give a Rugby game for the Division team or to take part in the variety theatricals played in a near-by barracks. But before the piece under way could be given, Section Thirty-One was relegated to history, for on September 22, 1917, the United States recruiting officers arrived to take over the Service.

KENT DUNLAP HAGLER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Springfield, Illinois; Harvard, '18; served in Section Thirty-One and in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service with the French Army during the war.

## II

### FROM THE NOTES OF THE CHEF

*Erize-la-Petite, August 19, 1917*

WE went into the sector near Hill 304 on August 11 and were cantoned in a village, Récicourt, that was under shell-fire all the time. In fact there was never a night when there was more than a two hours' interval between shells, and part of the time we were shelled continually. We had no *abris*, except a couple of makeshift affairs, which, besides being unsafe, were so wet and muddy that it was impossible for the men to sleep in them. On two occasions when gas-shells were used, one was compelled to use a gas-mask even in the village. I felt pretty anxious about this, and tried to get our cantonment farther back, for when men are working under fire it is only fair that, between times on duty, they be allowed rest at some place where they may feel reasonably safe. However, they got along all right with the work in spite of the fact that the shell-fire was so hot that driving would have tried the nerves of even an experienced Section.

On the night of August 13, we had a call for four cars, and though I heard the enemy was using gas, I took the cars up, only to find the road so blockaded that I left them at the *poste de secours* and came back to telephone that we were unable to reach the farther *postes*, but would keep cars near the blockade to bring back any *blessés* whom they could fetch to us there. In the meantime I found that Mueller had taken five cars out to meet a guide, sent by the *Médecin Divisionnaire*, who was to show him where the cars were needed. Mueller got as far as the blockade, where the gas was so thick that he took the five men and walked through to try to find the guide. But when he saw that the guide was not there to meet him, he waited until the gas cleared a little, then got



A "POSTE DE SECOURS" AT MONTAUVILLE





## SECTION THIRTY-ONE

---

about thirty-five *blessés* who had been injured by the gas at a near-by artillery *poste*, and brought them back. I would like to say a word commending Mueller for his work that night, for he had charge of those five new men and it was due to his efforts that they ever came out alive.

Well, there was the usual number of narrow escapes, for the fire was exceptionally heavy that night. We had two cars slightly damaged by shells and Lieutenant Maillard's staff car was ruined by one. Luckily we did not have a man hurt, except by gas, and yet in all the time I have been at the front I don't believe I have seen a more strenuous night. All the soldiers say that it is the worst gas attack they have ever experienced, and it was estimated that about ten thousand gas-shells were thrown into our sector. It was the new gas they used that did the harm, for besides being an asphyxiant, this gas has a nauseating effect which causes a man, who may get only a little of it, to vomit for several days after. It also makes the body break out with small sores. The next day I found we had suffered from the gas to the extent of having eleven drivers too ill to work.

I doubt if we have a section in the Service which has had a more severe test on its initial work at the front, and I am proud of the boys and the effort they made.

C. C. BATTERSHELL <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Milton, Illinois; born 1890; Whipple Academy, '10; American Field Service, Sections Thirteen and Thirty-One; First Lieutenant U.S.A. Ambulance Service in France during the war. The above report was written to Field Service Headquarters and is a fair sample of the scores of letters of this kind found in the archives.

### III

#### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SEPTEMBER 23, 1917, Section Thirty-One, while in Condé-en-Barrois, signed with the American Army and became S.S.U. Six-Forty-Three. October 2 it relieved S.S.U. Fifteen at Jouyen-Argonne, serving on the left bank of the Meuse with the 14th French Division. Line *postes* at Hills 232, 239, Montzéville, Marre, and Chattancourt. During November five cars were detached to assist S.S.U. Thirty during the attack on Hill 344. January 4, 1918, the Section was relieved by S.S.A. Four, and Six-Forty-Three convoyed to Velaines, where it was detached from the 14th Division which continued its way to the Vosges, two armies distant. Two weeks were spent at Savonnières *en repos*, and then the Section proceeded to Souilly, where it did evacuation work for the Second Army for a period of three weeks.

February 2 the Section went *en repos* at the Bois de Ravigny. On account of the Section being quarantined for diphtheria, it was six weeks before moving to the *casernes* at Bévaux. Two months were spent on the right bank of the Meuse doing line work for the 20th French Division at the following *postes*: Carrière d'Haudromont, Berges, Nice, and several call *postes*. From March, 1918, until March, 1919, the Section was attached to the 20th Division. In April, 1918, Lieutenant Battershell was replaced by Samuel S. Seward. The middle of May found the Section *en repos* at Ligny-en-Barrois, where it stayed for six days. May 28 the 20th Division and Section Six-Forty-Three were ordered post-haste northward to stop the gap made by the Boches on Chemin des Dames. The first Division to arrive on the scene on May 29 was the 20th and it got almost as far as Ville-en-Tardenois when it had to fall back.

For two days, though resisting stiffly, they were obliged to drop back until, on the night of the 30th, they crossed the Marne just to the right of Château-Thierry. The battles of Villers-Agron and of Jaulgonne are given high significance in the history of this German drive and here the Section did good work sticking with the line units and being obliged to evacuate its *blessés* sixty kilometres.

During the retreat Section cantonments were at Varennes, Baulne, and Celle-les-Condé. The month of June was spent

## SECTION THIRTY-ONE

---

working *postes* along the Marne from Celle-les-Condé as a headquarters. While here the 3d American Division joined the 20th French, and Six-Forty-Three did the line work for both Divisions, in the so-called halt of the German armies at Château-Thierry.

Leaving Celle-les-Condé, June 28, the Section proceeded to Dammartin, where it stayed for seven days with its Division in reserve for an expected drive at Villers-Cotterets. On the 5th of July it returned to the Marne, taking positions in the second line of defence between Château-Thierry and Dormans, the Section camping at *la ferme "Les Anglais."*

After driving the Germans across the Marne the 20th Division and Section Six-Forty-Three followed in active combat the ensuing retreat to the river Vesle. The advance was made through Chatillon, Ville-en-Tardenois, and finally stopped at the river, the Division holding from Fismes to Jonchery. Here the Section worked *postes* along the river Vesle from a cantonment at Lagery until September 1. Then the Division went *en repos* and the Section, making a cantonment at Chatillon, worked twenty cars a day evacuating for the *Corps d'Armée*. September 20, Division and Section went to the Vosges, making headquarters at Saint-Dié and Raon l'Étape. While here Section Six-Forty-Three worked for the 82d American Division as well as their own French Division.

Taking position early in November behind Baccarat for the expected drive against Metz, Armistice Day found the Section at Thaon-les-Vosges. The 20th Division made a triumphal procession on the heels of the Boches, and were the first Allies, and the men of Section Six-Forty-Three were the first Americans to reach the Rhine, arriving at Strasbourg on the dot of the permitted hour. After two weeks at Strasbourg the Section and Division moved south to Schlestadt, taking over the Rhine line, and remained here until Section Six-Forty-Three was called into Paris for demobilization on March 13, 1919. A Section Citation to the Order of the Division was received at Strasbourg, November, 1918, for work on the Marne and Vesle.

GORDON F. L. ROGERS <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Dedham, Massachusetts; Harvard; with Section Thirty-One in the Field Service; in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service for the remainder of the war.



## *Section Seventy-One*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. PHILIP SHEPLEY

II. EDWARD A. WEEKS, JR.



## SUMMARY

SECTION SEVENTY-ONE took over a section of Fiat cars in Noyon on July 31, 1917, and on August 2 was attached to the 158th Division, *en repos* at Nesle, on the Somme. On August 19 it moved to Lanchy on the Saint-Quentin front, with front *postes* at Holnon, Maissemy, a relay station at Marteville, and evacuation work at Ham, Cugny, and Noyon. The recruiting officers visited the Section on August 29, but the Section continued under the old régime until November, when the Fiats were abandoned; then the men transferred to a Ford Section at Belrupt, outside of Verdun, becoming, with what remained of Old Twenty-Nine, Section Six-Forty-One of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Seventy-One

Some pledge I could but dimly understand,  
Some subtle spell, lay on the calm and clear  
Blue harbor of this mute, majestic land,  
And hope shone smiling in the eyes of France.

GUY WETMORE CARRYL

### I

#### TO THE SAINT-QUENTIN FRONT

ON July 31, 1917, Section Seventy-One was formed, with Roland R. Speers as *Chef*, and James S. Brown as *Sous-Chef*. At Noyon we were assigned to Fiat ambulances, and on August 2 we joined the 158th Division, which was then *en repos* at Nesle, where we remained for nearly three weeks, passing the time with such diversions as chatting with the fair sex of the village, frequenting the café, and getting beaten 7 to 0 by the French divisional soccer team. As we were all craving action, being new to the game, the news that we were to leave for the front came as a welcome relief. In fact, on August 19 the Section moved to Lanchy on the Saint-Quentin front, where our Division had taken over the lines.

Of all the forsaken, desolate spots we had ever seen, Lanchy won first prize. Cold, rain, and mud added to the dismalness of our surroundings and tended to make existence pretty unpleasant, living as we did in tents and cellars.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

The work in this sector was not very strenuous. We had two front *postes*, one at Holnon, the other at Maissemy, of one car each, with a two-car relay station at Marteville. Two cars daily were on evacuation. This latter work was very popular, as it took us to Ham and Cugny, the home of some American Red Cross nurses, and sometimes as far as Noyon, with its ice-cream parlor and cafés. As we were working in a *repos* sector we did not see much action, except for a gas attack, during which all the Section was called out. Of course, there were the usual wild rumors of big *coups de main* and attacks that were to come off "next week," but which never materialized.

Gloom descended upon us on August 31, when the United States recruiting officers appeared to enlist men for the army; but Seventy-One enlisted a larger proportion of its men than any other Field Service section. Toward the end of October rumors spread that we were to be relieved, and on November 1 an Allentown section, fresh from America, appeared with little pasteboard-walled cars. After two days, during which we showed them the *postes*, we were ordered to leave for Noyon and turn in our cars. So glad were we to leave Lanchy that the convoy out to Noyon, once beyond the limits of Ham, developed into a whirlwind at which the *gendarmes* could only throw up their hands in despair.

After two days of bliss in Paris, the Section was cut to twenty-five members, who moved to Belrupt just outside of Verdun, where we relieved the members of Section Twenty-Nine, taking over their cars and equipment, and where we became attached to the 120th Division and worked the *poste de secours* at the Carrière d'Haudromont between Bras and Douaumont. Here, on November 22, Way Spaulding was severely wounded in front of the *abri*. During the thirty-five days at Belrupt, five of our cars were smashed by shells and all but two cars were hit by *éclats*. On December 8 we were relieved by a French Section of Fiats and moved to Andernay

## SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

---

*en repos.* On Christmas Day, with much "crape-hanging," we donned the "choker uniforms" and became S.S.U. Six-Forty-One of the United States Army Ambulance Service.

PHILIP SHEPLEY <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brookline, Massachusetts; Harvard, '20; served in the Field Service with Section Seventy-One, and subsequently in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## II

### GETTING TO THE FRONT

*Nesle, August 6*

GAS-MASKS and "tin derbies" were given out to-day, and, with both of them on, I look like some prehistoric fish. We were also warned by our Lieutenant regarding the new German gas-shells. It appears that they are filled with a combination gas, make very little noise when exploding — something on the order of a defective giant firecracker — and make their presence *first* known by a faint smell of garlic or mustard. Now we all run like fiends when some imaginative soul thinks he smells garlic. At the conclusion of his speech, the Lieutenant added that the present gas-masks were no protection against the new shells. I wonder what we're going to use them for.

*August 8*

AT last we've carried our first wounded, and if the war were to stop to-morrow, which it won't, I could at least say that I've seen some service, even though not actually under shot and shell. Early this morning Harry and I answered a call at Masy and transferred two *couchés* from the first-aid station there to the base hospital at Ham. The roads were terrible, and I, riding in the back, had a chance to witness the tortures endured by the poor devils who were bounced about in a very gruesome manner.

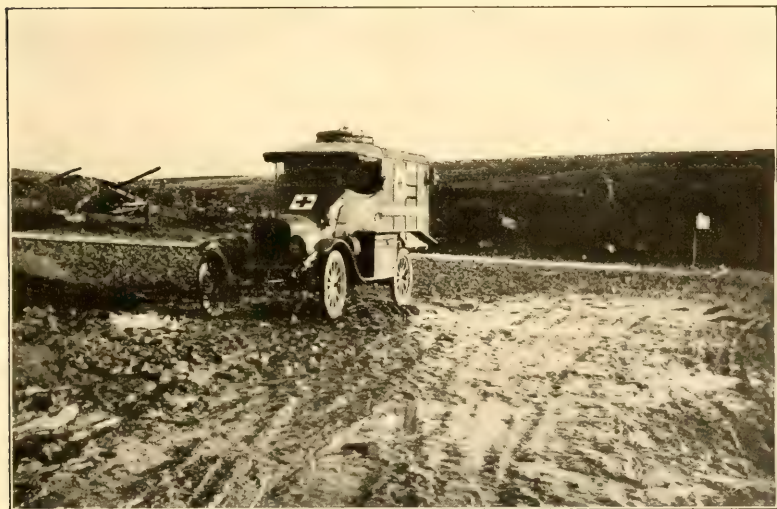
*August 11*

THIS afternoon Dick, Harry, and I visited Herly, Curchy, and Manicourt, ruined villages to the west of the château. They were in utter ruins, and were uninhabited save for a company or so of our Division, who were living in the old German dugouts. Everything was in perfect





WHEN CLEANLINESS IS A MYTH



WHERE ARMY-BLUE TURNS TO KHAKI!



## SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

---

order, as the Boches were forced to evacuate in such a hurry that they had little time for their usual "*strafing*." The dugouts, which were about eight feet long by six feet wide and six feet deep, were lined with thick sheet iron, on top of which were placed sandbags, then logs, and finally a thick layer of sod, the final product being perfectly disguised, and for a distance up to a third of a mile practically indistinguishable from the landscape. Many of them bore upon their walls somewhat pointed and impolite messages from the retiring Germans to the entering Canadians. The dirty Boches had time, however, before their departure, to chop down every fruit tree that lay anywhere near their path of retreat. I remember seeing a photograph of this atrocity in the pictorial supplement of the "Times" — a devastated orchard of which, out of a total of one hundred trees, but two remained standing. You can imagine my interest upon finding that the original of the picture was one of the ruined orchards at Manicourt.

*Nesle, August 16*

RATHER a humdrum day. The only outstanding event was the Lieutenant's leaving for his *permission*. He made us a little speech, during which he read us an official communication from the Division Commander in which the latter complimented the Section upon its general behavior and its quickness in responding to calls. When he had finished, we were purring like so many cats!

*Lanchy, August 20*

PROMPTLY at eight o'clock we left our quarters and set out for the front, destination unknown. Arrived at this town shortly after ten and parked behind S.S. Fifty-Eight, a French section, decorated with the *Croix de Guerre* for splendid work at Verdun. As soon as the French cars leave we should get our chance to do some of the real work for which we have been waiting.

### THE FRENCH SECTION "A" TENT

August 22

S.S. FIFTY-EIGHT left at eight o'clock this morning. I might say that until to-day we have been sleeping in our cars, secretly envying the Frenchmen who had provided themselves with tents made with *poilu* ground sheets. "Sandy," "Stew," and I had an opportunity, fortunately, to buy one, and very promptly did so. It is one of the larger type, about ten feet square, well entrenched and very sturdily put up. "Castle Cootie" is richly luxurious compared with our cramped and somewhat scented ambulances. We paid only fifty francs for the compartments, including an extra roof, and though tents have been ordered for the entire Section, I feel sure that we shall be greatly advanced in years before they arrive. Meanwhile our purchase is the admiration of the Section. We carried out our business transaction last evening, and I therefore felt it my duty to be present at the departure lest our newly acquired home were to take it into its head to leave with them. My appearance, shivering in my B.V.D.'s, was the signal for untold merriment. I accepted the tribute in stern silence.

August 24

LAST night the wind did blow; also the rain pattered, dripped, and drizzled through every possible crack and crevice in our most esteemed tent until "Castle Cootie" was one damp puddle of floating possessions. And yet the merry(?) patter of raindrops is a cheery sound under even the most discouraging conditions, and the three of us were soon wrapped in noisy but peaceful slumber. At 2.45 A.M., by actual observation of our wrist watches, tent number 2, owned by Messrs. Crosby, Fox, Salinger, and Spaulding, collapsed with a piteous sigh. Muffled curses, groans, and wails. At three, Crosby, a most heart-rending sight, indeed, crawls under the flap of our swaying mansion, dragging behind him two wet, muddy, and

## SECTION SEVENTY-ONE

---

exceedingly tired blankets. His entrance was greeted with suppressed snickers from our three cots, but he haughtily rolled himself up in the blankets, on the muddy floor, and, no sympathy forthcoming, silence followed. In the morning Harry presented a never-to-be-forgotten appearance: one belly-band, a pink pajama top, a heavy woollen undershirt, a white St. Mark's sweater, a raveled blue sweater constructed by "Her," and, as an outer shell, a goatskin coat; while his props were encased in a damp, mud-bespattered pair of pajama trousers, around which were wound, in a most uncertain manner, a pair of roll puttees!

*August 25*

BLUE MONDAY! It's raining as consistently as it did all day yesterday. The tent maintains its reputation as a sieve. And a huge mail from the States arrived, my share of which may be represented by the latter half of the number 10. Gloom!

*August 29*

WONDER of wonders!! Last night's rumors were verified this morning. Shortly before eleven, two United States officers and a very young-looking Army doctor drove up. After lunch the Section was addressed by Lieutenant Webster, and told that the Government had decided to take over every independent American organization on this side of the water. Then followed the necessary recruiting officer's "line," telling of the advantages, joys, and untold privileges to be derived from "signing up." We were given an hour to make up our minds, at the end of which time seventy per cent of the Section signed. "I'm in the army now," rendered by Private Weeks.

*August 30*

STILL recovering from yesterday's dismal prospect. Suppose this damnable war lasts for some seven years. I return, a rheumatic, crabby old bachelor, losing my hair in



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

bunches, to be greeted by strange faces on all sides and the consoling news that the object of my tenderest affections married some slacker five years before.

### REAL WORK

September 13

WE had our first real work last night. It appears that the Boche artillery had a holiday and spent the greater part of the evening throwing gas-shells into the second and third lines near Holnon. Their range was good — it always is — and they successfully cracked a few *abris* and threw things about in a most unpleasant manner. We got a call for "several ambulances" a little after ten, and I believe we made a record time to the *poste*. When we got there a rather unpleasant sight greeted us. All about the *abri* and in the forepart of the trench the ground was covered with gasping, prostrate figures of men, their faces a livid green, their foreheads shining with sweat, mumbling incoherently, twisting and turning in agony. It was our first experience with gas and one that did not tend to heighten our respect for the Hun. The *curé* was among those gassed, but he refused to accept any aid until all his men had been attended to, lapsing into unconsciousness just as the doctor bent over him. Just twoscore men gassed, an incident too trivial to be mentioned in the daily *communiqué*; just one of the million unrecorded sacrifices for which the Boches will have to pay some day.

EDWARD A. WEEKS, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Elizabeth, New Jersey; Cornell, '19; served as a driver in Section Seventy-One of the Field Service and, subsequently, with the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. The above are extracts from his unpublished diary.

NOTE. — Early in November most of the American *personnel* of Section Seventy-One, including the American Officers, were transferred from the borrowed French cars to the Field Service Fords of old Section Twenty-Nine.

Shortly thereafter this latter Section was renumbered by the U.S. Army, and became Section Six-Forty-One. Under this title it continued to function until after the Armistice.

## *Section Thirty-Two*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. GURNEE HINMAN BARRETT

II. JOHN S. CLAPP

## SUMMARY

ON July 31, 1917, Section Thirty-Two left the camp at May-en-Multien and came to Paris to get its cars. It left the city on August 2, *en convoi*, arriving two days later at Ablois Saint-Martin. On August 16 it was attached to an attacking division, and moved with the Division to Romigny, near Verdun, on August 28. The Division remained here until October 2, when it went into line on the Verdun front, in a sector on the Meuse River. The cantonment of the Section was at Houdainville. It came back *en repos* on November 4, and was relieved by the men who were to take over the Section under the Army régime. Thereafter the Section number was Six-Forty-Four of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Thirty-Two

And, conquering by her happiness alone,  
Shall France compel the nations to be free.

S. T. COLERIDGE

### I

#### THE NEW YORK CITY CLUB UNIT

WE of the New York City Club Unit cheered with no little envy Sections Thirty-One and Seventy-One as they left camp for active service. But we had to wait our turn. It came on July 31, 1917. Early that morning Ives lined us up in the courtyard before the office of *Chef* Fisher, at the old grist-mill camp, May-en-Multien. We gave three rousing cheers for Fisher and some more for *Sous-Chef* Magnus and the French *Maréchal des Logis*, our drillmaster. To everybody's surprise and extreme delight the latter then walked up to Ives and kissed him on both cheeks. The next two days were spent in Paris struggling with our cars. They started hard and did not run too well; however, with several cylinders still missing we were officially designated Section Thirty-Two of the American Field Service, Keith Vosburg, *Chef* in charge, Lieutenant Miossec, of the French Army, in command, and at 8 A.M., on August 2, we passed through the lower garden gate at 21 rue Raynouard in convoy on our way to the front.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Two days' driving brought us to a little village, Ablois Saint-Martin, where we parked our cars in a chestnut grove and awaited further orders. We were now in that indefinitely exclusive region — "somewhere in France." It rained incessantly and the mud was deep. Not until Verdun, however, were we to know what mud could be. The good housewives in whose homes we were cantoned showed great interest in "*les américains*," in many cases calling us their adopted sons.

Orders were slow in coming. For a while three meals a day were our principal concern. These meals were drawn from the regular French *ravitaillement*, and prepared under the supervision of our *Brigadier d'Ordinance*, a French *attaché* whom we called "Gabby." Now Gabby was an old hand at catering, but the American palate puzzled him. "What would the boys like me to bring them for dessert?" he asked one day. Some one shouted, "Lemons." Gabby looked doubtful, but the suggestion was loudly confirmed. Sure enough that night a basket of lemons appeared on the table. The laugh was on us — there was no doubt about that; but Gabby's feelings were at stake, so the basket of lemons went slowly up and down the table, each man solemnly taking one and stuffing it into his pocket with the explanation that "he'd save his until he got outside." "Well, you zee, my dear," said Gabby, "these *américains*, they are a funny lot, you zee!"

### REPOS — EXPERIMENTS IN PAINTING

To keep us out of mischief, *Chef* Vosburg ordered the red crosses on our ambulances enlarged. This required red and white paint and about four days' work. After that, no German, no matter how near-sighted, could possibly have mistaken our identity. Lieutenant Miossec was impressed and later inspired. He ordered a French flag to be painted beside each red cross, the measurements to be the same — about two feet square. Less enthusiasm was shown in this latter job, and when an order appeared to place in the last remaining panel an emblem characterized by the



## SECTION THIRTY-TWO

---

Lieutenant as a "Horse Sea," a shout of protest arose, but to no avail. Some one suggested that before any more orders were issued we had better enlarge the cars. So some of the men painted on their radiators the trademarks of the Mercer, the Rolls-Royce, and the Simplex. If the war had ended that week we could have sold out to Barnum and Bailey!

Not long after this we were officially attached to an attacking division, one that had several citations and much regained territory to its credit. The men in it were for the most part a hard-looking, light-hearted lot — sons of a tropical clime.

General Pétain paid the Division a visit at about this time. In his address he made much of its record and held out great hopes for the future. There was much talk among the men that night about a pending attack, in which case they all had their eyes on the yellow *fourragère*. The General had spoken well. But one little zouave, perhaps more sentimental than the rest, said, "I guess it's time to write home." A fifty per cent casualty list was not unusual for this Division. Soon we packed up and moved; then, after a few days, we moved again. Our convoys improved — the men were beginning to know their cars. This was fortunate because it became quite apparent that our destination was Verdun.

Then for a while, from August 28 on, we paused — a peaceful interlude. We were cantoned on an old farm at Romigny abounding in fruit trees and comprising several well-cleared fields. We promptly laid out a diamond and organized ball teams. After playing a minor series, we started what promised to be a spell-binding contest. But poor old Carl Schweinler broke his leg sliding to home plate and all bets were off.

It was while we were on this farm that the recruiting officers called. We had long realized that our volunteer days were numbered; that all the privately subscribed ambulances would eventually be taken over by the United States; and that in order to continue our work we should

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

have to enlist as privates in the National Army. Sixteen men enlisted, the rest of the Section remaining as volunteers until new recruits could fill the ranks. There was no immediate change in the organization, however.

### ON THE MEUSE

OUR Division went into the line on October 2 and we established ourselves in a little village, Houdainville, directly on the river Meuse. In order to learn the roads six of us were detailed to the English section that we were to relieve the following day. Starting from the hospital we proceeded by a tree-lined boulevard past one of the gates of Verdun. There we turned to the right up the side of one of the surrounding hills, and just before reaching the crest, at a point about seven kilometres from the hospital, we came upon a series of bomb-proofs that we were to use as a relay *poste*, or "cab stand," as we called it. Less than a year before, this *poste* had been the most advanced in the sector, the German lines being only a few hundred yards away. But when we were there the distance to the lines was measured in kilometres and we drove to our advanced *postes* through this recently regained territory.

The road from the "cab stand" to the farthest *poste* was terrific. For a kilometre it was broad enough, straight and partly camouflaged, but after that it became narrow, crooked, and very rough. The surrounding country had once been wooded, with here and there a town, but now it was the symbol of desolation, a few upturned stumps and shattered logs being all that remained of a forest. As for the town sites, they were impossible to find, the *terrain* resembling the moon — a mass of overlapping crater holes. After a rain these holes became partly filled with stagnant water and a stench arose that was horrible in its suggestiveness. Officially thousands upon thousands of soldiers have been reported "missing" on these fields. But, more literally, they have returned to clay. Such was the regained territory we traversed. The last stretch of road ran down a jagged gulch and terminated in a pool of

## SECTION THIRTY-TWO

---

filthy water. There being no room to turn around in the gulch, we always backed our cars down. This would be quite a feat under any circumstances because of the ever-present mud, stones, and débris, but we usually had to do it in total darkness, frequently in the midst of bursting shells.

The *poste* itself lay in a hollow at the foot of a limestone outcrop, which had been a quarry before the Germans converted it into a bomb-proof. It was said to be thirty feet underground, and hence safe. That was its only virtue. Water trickled perpetually down the walls, keeping the mean high level on the floor about ankle-deep. Ventilation was out of the question. Acetylene gas, chloride of lime, and the odors given out by dirty wet clothes formed the principal constituents of the atmosphere. Three hours in this place, particularly when it was filled with wounded, was enough to create a splitting headache. In addition to this *poste* were two others which paled by comparison. They were smaller, cleaner, and at less distance from the "cab stand."

During the first weeks that we worked this sector we experienced rain, snow, and fog, and we drove in nights of utter blackness, so black in fact that it was frequently necessary to feel one's way on foot just ahead of the car in order to find the road. Four hours for the round trip of fourteen kilometres was not uncommon, and there were places along the way where a miscalculation of two feet would mean the total loss of a car. Accidents were inevitable. Artillery caissons passing at the gallop robbed us of tool-boxes, and mud-guards crumbled when brought in contact with trucks, all of which was particularly trying to the sensitive souls of those fastidious drivers who two weeks before had tenderly removed mud from headlights and polished scratches on hoods. No wonder, therefore, that one night within an hour four cars were put out of commission; the most picturesque of these turning over like a turtle on his back in the mouth of a huge shell-hole. Several front ends were replaced on the road and many a

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

car was towed into the repair shop. Radiators fell particularly easy prey to exploding shells, and during the first ten days fourteen of our cars were pierced by *éclats*; but fortunately, no one was hurt. Twenty-four hours on and twenty-four hours off is a strenuous schedule when it lasts over a month, and when one hundred and fifty kilometres is the average run per man per shift; such was our existence at this time. Little wonder, therefore, that we began to think of *repos*, which came on November 4, together with the men sent to replace those who had not enlisted.

Following quickly on the heels of this period of rest came the welcome news of a section citation and five individual *Croix de Guerre*. At the ceremony attendant on the conferring of these honors the General of the Division made a very gracious speech in which he said:

Some months ago, you came to us as strangers, but now the men of my Division regard you as brothers and I look upon you as my children. You have recently been called upon to perform a difficult and dangerous task. Your performance has been above criticism. In a word, you have shown yourselves to be as brave as the men who fight in the trenches. I therefore take great pleasure in presenting you with the highest honor that is within my power to bestow.

GURNEE HINMAN BARRETT <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Columbia, '10; served with Section Thirty-Two of the Field Service; subsequently a First Lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.







THE GARDEN OF "RUE RAYNOUARD" IN WINTER





## II

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

NOVEMBER 3, 1917, the Section, now relabeled Six-Forty-Four, took part in its first engagement under American régime, at Verdun, in the Bezonvaux sector between Forts Douaumont and Vaux. It was in the line during a period of thirty-five days, and evacuated 3040 *blessés*. Although we had no casualties we lost two of our cars. The Section here received its first citation.

After a ten-day *repos* at Combles, the Division went into the lines, again at Verdun, and captured Hill 344. We carried 4210 wounded during the ten days the Division was in the lines. On December 3 the Section went *en convoi* to Bar-sur-Aube, where it remained *en repos* for a period of two weeks. At Darney we settled down for a long cold winter. On January 21 of the new year we quit Darney, going to Custines, a small town on the Nancy front. From here we operated *postes* in and around Nomény.

The Section left this sector about the first of March for the front near Amiens. The Division went into the lines at Villers-Bretonneux, and the Section was cantoned directly in back of the troops, at Petit Blangy, later at Patte d'Oie, where we camped alongside of the main road between Amiens and Saint-Quentin. We again were forced to move, and this time went to the Bois de Fort Manon, where we stayed until August 2, operating *postes* in front of Villers-Bretonneux and to the left of that town. We then went to Wailly, and from there, after a few days' wait, to Cottenchy where the Division made a joint attack with the British on their right. The Germans were forced back to the general line of Ham, Nesle, Roye, etc. During this attack the Section took its first part in open warfare, as well as occupying reconquered territory for the first time. The Division by forced marches through Maignelay, Jonquières, and Ribécourt, went into the lines at Chiry-Ourscamp, and, attacking, captured Noyon, then advancing to La Fère. During this time the Section made their evacuations in such a manner as to receive another citation.

From there the Division advanced through the towns of Chevresis, Monceau, Parpeville, Puisieux, and thence to Hirson, in a continuation of the Aisne-Oise offensive. The Armistice was signed the day after the Section reached Hirson.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Returning to La Fère, we remained there until the latter part of December, when we started *en convoi* for the Vosges, preparatory to taking part in the French occupation of Germany. We stayed in Rambervillers two weeks, and then went into reconquered Alsace on February 14, 1919, stopping for a few days in the town of Sarrebourg. From there the Section conveyed to Einöd, in the Palatinate, and thence to Alsie (Hesse), Bierstadt, in Rhenish Prussia, near Wiesbaden, and to Niederhausen, where the Section was cantoned for two weeks or so; moving from there to Ober Losbach. From that place started the final convoy of the Section for Paris.

JOHN S. CLAPP <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Auburndale, Massachusetts; in T.M.U. 397 during his time with the Field Service, and in Section Six-Forty-Four of the U.S. Ambulance Service with the French Army during the remainder of the war.



## *Section Thirty-Three*

THE STORY TOLD BY

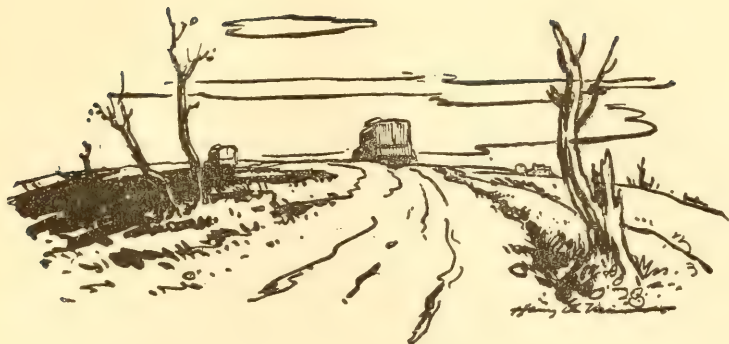
I. ROBERT RIESER

II. RICHARD C. PAINE

## SUMMARY

SECTION THIRTY-THREE left for the front on August 16, 1917, the last Field Service Section to go out. It went *via* Bar-le-Duc to Issoncourt, and on September 6 to Triaucourt to join the 26th Division. The Section was enlisted on September 25, and the next day went to Grange-le-Comte, and shortly afterward to Clermont-en-Argonne. Early in November it became Section Six-Forty-Five in the U.S. Army Ambulance Service.





## Section Thirty-Three

The land of sunshine and of song!  
Her name your hearts divine;  
To her the banquet's vows belong  
Whose breasts have poured its wine;  
Our trusty friend, our true ally  
Through varied change and chance.  
So, fill your flashing goblets high, —  
I give you, VIVE LA FRANCE!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

### I

#### A BRIEF CAREER WITH THE A.F.S.

A NARRATIVE of the brief career of Section Thirty-Three has little to offer the reader in the way of high-explosive thrills, shell-swept roads, or hair-breadth escapes; yet the last ambulance unit to leave rue Raynouard driving Fords must not be left "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

On August 16, 1917, twenty-one spick-and-span new Ford ambulances, a staff car, and *camionnette* formed in hollow square in the lower garden, and after an inspection by Mr. Andrew and some officers of the United States Army, rolled out of the gates in obedience to a series of unrehearsed and complicated whistle signals, concocted by our *Chef* to meet the emergency. Despite the signals and the ill-advised attempt of a car in the hands of a green driver to climb over the car ahead and wreck the stately

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

trees of the garden, we passed out into the street and history, and toward the distant battle-line.

At Montmirail we parked our cars the first night and proceeded to get acquainted. The personnel included as our French Lieutenant, Henry Laurent, Gordon Ware as *Chef*, and Bruce H. McClure, *Sous-Chef*.

On the following day we reached Bar-le-Duc, where we had our first view of an air raid, new to us, but an old story to the inhabitants, and also our first experience with troop barracks and army beds, with the compensation of a refreshing swim in the canal outside of town. On August 19 we pulled out of Bar, leaving most of our available cash in the hands of the local shopkeepers, and rolled on to Issoncourt, where we went into camp in what was left of a farm. A cow-stable offered quarters to those of us who did not bunk in our cars, and here we were introduced to several varieties of insect life that were destined to form lasting attachments for us in the days to follow.

At Issoncourt we remained in mud and melancholy until September 6, employing our leisure in the manufacture of camp furniture, perfecting our French, enjoying an occasional tramp over portions of the Marne battlefield near by, and filling ourselves with several delicious varieties of plums growing in profusion about us.

On the night of the 6th, in the midst of a howling rain-storm, we packed up at an hour's notice and were off to join the 26th Division of the Second Army at Triaucourt, where we arrived the same night. Visions of immediate action stirred us, but our hopes of high adventure received another jolt, for here we parked our cars on either side of a main thoroughfare and remained quiescent for eighteen long days. Some of us slept in our cars and others found quarters in a hay-loft whose sole means of entry was a rickety ladder, an inducement to sobriety if nothing else.

On September 25 we departed from Triaucourt with no regrets, and after a night at Grange-le-Comte, the



BRONZE STATUETTE DESIGNED BY A FRENCH SOLDIER, JULIEN MONIER  
IN WESSERLING, ALSACE, 1916, AS A TRIBUTE TO SECTION NINE



## SECTION THIRTY-THREE

---

Section moved to Clermont-en-Argonne, where we were soon comfortably established in one of the few comparatively whole houses in town. The advanced *postes* which we served at Neuilly and Dervin kept us busy, and offered enough in the way of thrills, but the fates that seem to watch over the destinies of ambulance drivers were good to us, for despite frequent close calls, we suffered no casualties in the Clermont sector.

On the 4th day of November, S.S.U. Thirty-Three officially passed into history and became Section Six-Forty-Five of the United States Army Ambulance Service. Brief though its existence as a volunteer unit may have been, Thirty-Three was thoroughly imbued with the sentiments of the units that preceded it in the field, and the high standards and splendid traditions of the American Field Service in France.

ROBERT RIESER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Hoboken, New Jersey; Columbia; served with the American Field Service for three months, 1917; subsequently with the Red Cross in Italy and later an *Aspirant*, French Artillery.





## II

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

AT the time of its militarization, the Section was in Clermont-en-Argonne, where it remained, getting accustomed to the army life, until Christmas Day, 1917. The month of January, 1918, was spent *en repos* at Andernay, and on February 6 the Section was sent to Houdainville, below Verdun. For six weeks or more we were extremely busy and had many exciting moments, serving the famous *postes* east of the city.

Early in April we were ordered to Sommedieue in the Woivre, where the entire spring was passed with not an overdose of thrills. On the 10th of August we started for Soissons, arriving after numberless one-night stands on the 25th. Quarters were taken up in the lowlands of the Aisne near Fontenoy. For four days and nights our infantry attacked, and we were overwhelmed with strenuous work. Our cars were on the road continuously, serving *postes* which constantly shifted their position, and lent a nervous uncertainty that added to the strain.

On August 29 Hess, a very fine chap, was killed by a bomb, and Naslund and Mackie were wounded. For the work done at this time the Section received a citation.

A ten-day rest and we were returned to the same sector to take part in the Aisne-Oise offensive, which was only halted by the Armistice. Descending then in convoy, we spent the winter at Forbach, in Lorraine, where our troops were on garrison duty. The Section left in March for Base Camp.

RICHARD C. PAINE <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Harvard, '17; served with Section Thirty-Three from September, 1917, and after its militarization with the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.

*Section Seventy-Two*

THE STORY TOLD BY

I. JOHN H. WOOLVERTON

## SUMMARY

SECTION SEVENTY-TWO arrived at May-en-Multien on August 6, 1917. It left for the front, driving French ambulances, on August 18, 1917. After *repos* of two weeks at Noyon, it was sent to the front at Saint-Quentin. *En route* for this place, it was enlisted, at Flavy-le-Martel, by the American recruiting officers, being the first section of the Service taken over by the U.S. Army. It continued work under the old régime until November, when it filled in Old Section Twenty-Seven's vacancies and took over their Fords, becoming Section Six-Thirty-Nine of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## *Section Seventy-Two*

Frenchman, a hand in thine!  
Our flags have waved together!  
Let us drink to the health of thine and mine  
And swear to be friends for ever.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

### I

#### THE "YOUNGEST SON" SECTION

SEVENTY-TWO was the youngest son of a large family. When only one day weaned from a dusty preliminary *repos* of two weeks at Noyon, the Section undertook its first service at Saint-Quentin. Immediately thereafter came the United States recruiting officers offering every man the opportunity to become a private in the American Army, but to remain with the Section in the Sanitary Service of the French Army. One of the first groups to be visited by these officers, we have the distinction of enlisting every man able to meet the physical requirements, except one. Four of the original number were rejected on physical grounds.

The last complete section sent out from the Field Service Headquarters in Paris, we found ourselves, September 5, 1917, just emerging from the embryo of war in

the abstract into active service and the American Army. Our personnel, with the exception of our *Chef*, was composed of the young men who sailed from the docks of the French line in New York City on two steamers, the *Chicago*, leaving July 23, and the *Rochambeau*, leaving August 3, 1917.

Those of us who came over on the *Chicago* arrived in Paris from Bordeaux on the morning of August 4, and on the afternoon of the 6th we were transferred to May-en-Multien. The fortnight spent at this camp will always be remembered by us as a real midsummer idyll; for, although May was located in the now famous Marne district, scarcely thirty-five kilometres from the Soissons front, the sound of the cannon was only dimly heard. Here the enemy in hasty retreat had been unable to commit his customary acts of vandalism, and the beautiful country was practically untouched. So we received our first taste of rural France in a lazy courtyard, surrounded by buildings which had once been the possession of a rich miller, trying in vain to realize that we were so near the scene of gruesome war.

The majority of the *Chicago's* Field Service passengers quartered at May preferred to drive Ford cars, and out of these a new section, Thirty-Three, was immediately formed. When this group left the camp for the front, the rest of us, who had spoken for gear-shift cars, were compelled to wait until our personnel could be increased by new men. Nine days after our arrival the ambulance recruits from the *Rochambeau* came out from Paris, and from this group we were able to fill out a complete section of forty-nine men, and on August 18, after two days of intensive driving on May's historic *voitures*, we were transported back to Paris.

Again our stay in Paris was brief. The day after our arrival we were lined up at rue Raynouard and informed that we would henceforth be known as S.S.U. Seventy-Two and that we would take over a former French section of twenty Fiats, two men to be placed on each car.



## SECTION SEVENTY-TWO

---

We were then introduced to our Section Commander, *Chef* William Westbrook. In the early morning of the following day, August 19, we were routed out of bed and despatched to the military town of Noyon, in the Oise, where we were to await instructions for joining a French division, and where our twenty cars were lined up on the main highway to Saint-Quentin, in the heart of the town. They were seasoned veterans, these cars, and were scarred and battered by great campaigns. Each one, however, had been carefully repaired at the Noyon *parc* before our arrival, and could be counted on for years more of active service. Owing to the lack of quarters, most of us had to sleep on the stretchers in these very cars; so they became near and dear to us from the very start.

For precisely two weeks we led an absolutely useless existence, which was principally spent in inhaling dust and exhaling epithets; and somehow the veteran cars seemed as impatient as we were at this forced idleness. During the first week Lieutenant Gibily, our French commanding officer, to whom we became greatly attached, was transferred elsewhere. He was followed by two other French officers who came and went for reasons known to the inner circles only. This did not tend to remove our impatience. It seemed at times as though we were to remain without the extremely valuable surveillance of French authority.

Saturday evening, September 1, we received orders to move forward toward Saint-Quentin, and the next morning the staff car, *camionnette*, and twenty ambulances, with our complete equipment, moved slowly over the road in convoy, and stopped at about noon on the outskirts of Flavvy-le-Martel, where late in the afternoon of the same day the American recruiting officers followed us out from Noyon and formally enlisted the entire Section, with the several justifiable exceptions mentioned earlier. So what we at first thought meant active work at the front, really ended only in our incorporation into the American army, which was well

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

enough as far as it went, but which did not go far enough for most of us.

Our camp, which had been a prosperous stock and poultry farm surrounding a spacious court, was cleaned up until it was made quite comfortable. The shacks used for houses were reënforced. Useless acetylene gas-tanks were stripped from the cars and served as generators for truly modern lighting systems. Stoves for winter we found among deserted ruins. Daily the cantonment and court were swept and cleaned furiously. But none of us lost in weight, thanks to work enough for appetite and good food. The historian is compelled to be truthful and admit that Section Seventy-Two's story ends where most others begin. Our work came after Section Seventy-Two of the Field Service was combined with S.S.U. Twenty-Seven, and had become Section Six-Thirty-Nine of the United States Army Ambulance Service.

JOHN H. WOOLVERTON <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Trenton, New Jersey; Dartmouth; served with Section Seventy-Two from August, 1917, and continued in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.



# *Field Service Haunts and Friends*

## TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD

- I. Raymond Weeks
- II. Stephen Galatti
- III. Joseph R. Greenwood
- IV. David Darrah
- V. J. W. D. Seymour

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

- I. John R. Fisher
- II. John R. Fisher
- H. Burt Herrick
- III. Robert A. Donaldson
- IV. Stephen Galatti

## TWO LOYAL FRIENDS OF THE FIELD SERVICE

- I. Arthur J. Putnam
- II. Preston Lockwood

## FRENCH OFFICERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICE

Stephen Galatti

## “21”

Do you remember a west postern gate,  
Unnoticed to the loud street and casual glance,  
There in the dim heart of Passy —  
Or down below, where our past lives relate  
Their kindred tales to the “Sweetheart of Romance,”  
On the long-historied terraces 'neath massy  
Chestnut-shadows by the winding Seine?

And after summer you may still remember,  
Were it your fortune to come back on leave  
And see that magic garden in the rain,  
Or couched in opiate mists that wan November  
Dropped over Paris in those days of pain.

Long after, when the lustre of young days,  
Worn dull with grinding on the years behind,  
Leaves me 'twixt weakness and the winding sheet,  
Light the last taper — phantom of the mind!  
Lead to the kind portals of the “*vieux château*”:  
Give me in those enduring halls to meet  
“*Mes vieux copains*” — be thankful it was so,  
We served the better for that loved retreat,  
Raynouard, in the dim heart of Passy!

RAYMOND W. GAUGER



## *Twenty-One Rue Raynouard*

### I

#### A CORNER OF OLD PASSY

TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD! What an echo these words will always arouse in the hearts of all of us who came to know the château and especially the beautiful park! The American Field Service has had many generous benefactors, none of whom will be remembered with greater gratitude than the Comtesse de la Villestreux and the members of the Hottinguer family, who, in July, 1916, placed at our disposal this princely estate, which includes the largest and most beautiful private park within the fortifications of Paris. Those four or five acres of forest, gardens, and lawns offered an ideal arrangement. The low part by the Seine provided easy ingress and egress for our ambulances, with plenty of space for a hundred and fifty or more at one time, under the protection of enormous trees. A winding drive led up to successive terraces, until one stood in front of the château, on the top of the hill of Passy. As one looks down from this point, one sees at the left the dense, dark foliage of the largest grove of chestnuts in Paris, and on



the right the romantic chalet, with a glimpse of the orchard beyond. Between these extremes, paths wind about, leaving a broad lawn in the centre. Above and through the trees one catches sight of the sparkling waters of the Seine, while beyond the chestnut grove stands the lacelike Eiffel Tower.

There are interesting things too numerous to mention about the house and grounds. Most of us know that kings and the great Emperor have walked here. Under the top terrace runs the long gallery beneath whose massive vault thousands of young *ambulanciers* have eaten. They did not often know that this room used to be called the "Orangery," that a statue of the king stood in the large niche in the northern wall, and that, if the soil seemed always moist, it was because here ran, and still struggles to run, one of the famous springs of Passy. For the place was noted as early as the seventeenth century because of three medicinal springs, and was called "*Les Eaux de Passy*." It was in the Orangery that Rousseau wrote part of his *Devin du Village*, as he himself tells us. His beloved Madelon, to whom he wrote his *Lettres sur la Botanique*, was none other than Mme. Gautier, the mistress of the château. The family still possesses these letters, as well as the herbarium which he composed for her.

Some of us remember another gallery, with even huger vaults, under the first terrace. This gallery is much older, as its walls and windows indicate. Here may still be seen many of the ancient jars in which the precious waters were carried up from the springs. This gallery was due to the first great exploiter of the *Eaux de Passy*, the Abbé Le Ragois, who is remembered as the almoner of Mme. de Maintenon. The *abbé* lived in a house which stood on the site of the house of the *concierge*, by the "lower gate," and his lands extended for some distance beyond the present eastern limits of the park. His *clientèle* included hundreds of the nobility and of the most influential people of Paris and vicinity. After the

death of the *abbé* in 1725, his niece inherited the estate. The establishment enjoyed a great extension under the next proprietor, M. Belamy, who twice a week kept "open house." Tables were set under the trees when the weather permitted, and, at other times, in the gallery built by the Abbé Le Ragois. From 1777 to 1785 one of the most familiar figures to be seen walking in the park was that of Benjamin Franklin, who lived near by in the rue Raynouard. La Tour d'Auvergne lived here from 1776 to 1800.

In 1803 the son of M. Belamy sold the property to Mme. Gautier and to the brothers Delessert. One of these three brothers established a refinery on the place and was the first person to obtain sugar from beets. This discovery led to the visit of Napoleon, on January 2, 1812. He was so delighted at the success of M. Delessert that he then and there decorated him and made him a baron. The three brothers occupied separate houses, using the park in common. No. 21 rue Raynouard was the residence of Benjamin Delessert, while François Delessert lived at No. 27, and Gabriel Delessert, No. 19. Toward the close of the nineteenth century, it is of interest to us to note, the sculptor Bartholdi, the author of Liberty Enlightening the World, lived at the château. After his death, the Baronne Bartholdi continued the traditions of hospitality and generosity which have endeared the place to so many generations.

The establishment of the "waters of Passy" was closed to the public towards the year 1868, but Mme. Delessert long continued the gratuitous distribution of the waters among the poor. The reddish waters still flow in the subterranean passage which many of us have visited. At one place a bright tin cup invites one to drink. Those who have explored this passage for some distance readily believe the statement that a vaulted passage leads from the château to the Seine, for every few days of our residence in this enchanted place has brought glimpses of unsuspected mysteries — vaulted,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

closed chambers, long underground corridors that lead Heaven knows where, the old orchard, the latticed grapevines, the labyrinth, the *cavernes* in the cliff where ice and milk were kept, the stone tables, the remnants of the rose garden. Then, from the farthest end of the estate one looks across the strange, deserted rue Berton to what remains of the park of the Duc de Lauzun and the château, which were purchased in 1783 by the unfortunate Princesse de Lamballe. Rue Berton here turns at right angles and becomes, in the part which runs parallel to rue Raynouard, the narrowest street in Paris: you can stand in the middle of it and touch the two sides with your hands. The Princesse was perhaps not a dreamer, but, just opposite her dwelling, on a terrace at the top of the wall, stands the diminutive house and garden of one of the greatest dreamers the world has known, Balzac.

It is safe to say that we may forget many things in connection with our expedition to France, but we shall not forget the generosity of the gracious and charming French family who placed at our disposal the house and park at 21 rue Raynouard.

RAYMOND WEEKS <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, and University of Paris; Professor of Romance Languages at Columbia University; served on the Staff of the Field Service in France from July, 1917, to January, 1918.



## II

### RUE RAYNOUARD AND THE SERVICE

IT was in the early part of the summer of 1916 that fortune smiled on those whose chief occupation it was at the time to find new headquarters for the American Field Service. One might assume that it would have been easy to secure a suitable place somewhere in Paris. Office room — yes, that was easy; a house or hotel for the men, and a garage for the cars — equally so. But we had even then a vision of many men and cars to come, and to have these scattered throughout the city would involve not only serious inconvenience in matters of administration, but would also require many men to supervise the various establishments — men who were needed at the front. Centralization, on the other hand, would mean better organization, especially under conditions where every moment might bring changes to alter all our plans and require immediate action. A telegram from the front demanding men or supplies had to be met instantly, and centralization could coördinate the sending of both without loss of time. At a moment's notice new cars could be despatched; new equipment or parts forwarded; men could be found, given their necessary papers, and sent to the train fully equipped — all small but vital factors if a service is to be run to its greatest efficiency. Fortune, after many disappointments, smiled, for Baron Hottinguer and his family heard of the quest, and immediately placed at our disposal the house and grounds of 21 rue Raynouard, the one place in all Paris which was perfectly suited to our needs, and which, as time went on, proved its elasticity in every emergency.

Since that time, except for a handful of ambulance drivers who returned to America before the summer of 1916, there is not a member of the American Field Service who has not been affected in some way by 21 rue Ray-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

nouard. Throughout all the memories of varied experiences at the front remains an ever-present background of the contact with this home, for it was necessarily there that the first impressions of France and of the Service were stamped indelibly in the mind of every newly arrived volunteer. There centred the realization of each one's hopes in at last reaching Paris; the first steps which enabled him to start in service; the final period of preparation and the start for the camp or section; the return after three months to civilization for those all too short seven days of leave; and finally the return from this great adventure at the completion of the enlistment period and while waiting for a boat to America or an opportunity to enlist in some other branch of military service. Rue Raynouard is indeed a part of the history of the Field Service, for each volunteer has woven there some of his story.

But it was especially the beauty and associations of the place which made its name such a permanent memory in the minds of all those who came in contact with it. Although only one of the many historical and beautiful spots in Paris, it was one which belonged to us without restrictions while we were there. For the donors, in entrusting it to those who had come to France to help her cause, had stipulated only, that we should come to them again whenever there might be need of their help. In it we found on our arrival the expression of that which we found everywhere later in France; namely, generosity, patriotism, beauty, and rich associations with the past.

It was into such surroundings that we moved in July, 1916, with our small staff, opened our offices on the top floor, and installed our housekeeping arrangements below. We were a small family in those days, as there were only six sections at the front, and two tables in the dining-room easily sufficed for the staff, *permissionnaires*, and new men. I am sure that we all enjoyed our new comfort to the full. Moreover, we appreciated the fact that we could now face satisfactorily the supply problem



of the Service by laying up material and stores for the future. The sections required a vast quantity of equipment and supplies, which they could not carry with them, but which they called for continually; and it was now possible to obtain a large portion of these from America and hold them for immediate issue. A store was opened for the personal equipment of the men at wholesale prices. The large garden gave us not only adequate room for the finished ambulances waiting to be driven to the front, but also a space for cased *chassis* waiting their turn to go to the body-builders.

The family soon grew rapidly, and during the next winter "rue Raynouard," as we familiarly called the estate, was taxed more and more. It seemed only necessary, however, to hunt somewhere in the spacious house and grounds, and new resources could always be found to solve the housing problems as they arose. These proved adequate for the Service, but with the extraordinary development in the spring of 1917, it was decided that, for the comfort of the *permissionnaires*, outside help must be sought. Again our generous donors came to the rescue and the accommodations for men returning from the front were transferred to the near-by property, owned by the same family, at 5 rue Lekain. This establishment under a separate housekeeper was run as an annex to 21 rue Raynouard, which could no longer be used for anything except office rooms and quarters for the staff and servants, with the exception of the two living-rooms and dining-rooms where the men congregated. It was possible, however, to take care of all the new men in the garden. Barracks and tents were erected which furnished accommodations for the housing of about four hundred. The mess was run in the ancient vaulted gallery under the topmost terrace which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had served as a meeting-place for the *élite* who came to take the waters of Passy.

The garden now would have presented a strange sight

to a nobleman of those old days. Imagine him returning to Passy and going on his old appointed way to the passage which leads to the subterranean spring. He would find at its very entrance a large military barrack with military equipment scattered about. Turning back in dismay up the stone stairway, he would find it the same with its ancient setting of trees and shrubberies, with perhaps the ivy grown somewhat thicker over the stone railing. But on reaching the upper terrace, where he was wont to greet his friends on a beautifully kept lawn, he would wander into a village of military barracks, and in trying to find his way out might emerge to the right only to find another military dormitory in the old greenhouse where once the rarest of flowers were grown. In this confusion he might try to seek a haven in the adjoining subterranean gallery in the thought that its age and associations must have kept it sacred. But no — a long line of tin cups and plates along the wall and the rows of plain wooden tables the length of the gallery indicate a new epoch, the illusion of which even the familiar dampness and semi-darkness cannot dispel. He would turn toward the old stone staircase which leads up through the house to the court, only to find the entrance blocked by two huge stoves on which the soup for the midday meal is already steaming. He might now return by the garden, and in turning toward the left he would notice a familiar clump of trees sheltering a Swiss chalet, installed there since his time, but years old in comparison with what he has just seen. He would go in, perhaps, to rest for a moment only to be greeted by a nurse in blue uniform standing by a table covered with various medicine bottles and glasses. She would inform him that the chalet was now used as an infirmary for Field Service men whose injuries or illnesses were not serious enough for treatment at a military hospital. From here he might descend the old alley and turn to go out by the large gate at the foot of the park. A bit of familiar path, and soon he must pick his way amidst a jumble of wrecked ambulances. He

would stop for a moment wondering what story the wrecked engines, broken wheels, and shell-torn bodies had to tell. And this graveyard of war would perhaps stimulate his mind to a realization of what it all meant, and a pardon for the apparent desecration of a spot which he had so cherished.

Even though the average volunteer, as he passed through "rue Raynouard" from time to time, did not, perhaps, realize fully either the historical associations of this charming old place, or, what was of most importance to the staff, its wonderful adaptability to present needs, yet each one must have appreciated the fact that this spacious and homelike house and garden gave him a splendid opportunity for contact with his fellow workers and with men from other sections. Both around the long tables at meal-time, in the living-rooms during the evening, and in summer under the trees or on the terraces of the park, the various members of the Service rubbed elbows with each other, and it was here that the new man learned at first hand of the work he would be called upon to do at the front. I could always tell from what section *permissionnaires* had arrived the night before, for the next morning the new men would come to my office and beg to be sent out to that section, because, as they assured me, it was the best and most active in the Service.

How many stories of the Service were told and retold at "rue Raynouard"! Many of them have become legends. You do not need to inquire of a man from Section Four how Rockwell and Crane with super-mechanical ability changed a rear axle with such precision that the ambulance had to be driven in reverse from the *poste de secours* to the cantonment — every one knows it. The dread of "Hogan's Alley" is no one's possession. You of Sections Two and Four think you knew it best, but I am certain that any *ambulancier* can relate a tale about it with a thrill that will outstrip any of your real experiences. Section Three is convinced that it owns Alsace, but ask

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

any man in the Service and he will tell you just where the "*Charbonnier's Corner*" is. Perhaps Section Eight does not know to this day how each individual ambulance travelled from Lorraine to the Somme during the 1916 attack, but ask anybody else how a "perfect convoy" should be run and he can tell you.

Small and insignificant interests, perhaps, compared to what was going on in France, but they were the day's work of our sections and in their telling and retelling the traditions of the Service grew. Time could never be dull at Headquarters even for those who were confined there permanently, for returning men each day brought some news of the sections and friends at the front. That the staff loved their task, even though the pressure of work rarely allowed them a day's holiday, was mainly due to this continual and stimulating contact.

An excellent opportunity presented itself at "*rue Raynouard*," of giving the men as they arrived a chance to come in touch with those who were helping to direct the policies, thought, and activities of France, and also with some of their own countrymen whose keen interest in the Service reflected their sympathy for France. This was the inauguration of a series of farewell dinners for the sections, given on the eve of their departure for the front. Any *permissionnaires* who happened to be at Headquarters at the time were privileged to attend, so that these dinners, which occurred at rather regular intervals, were usually attended by fifty or sixty men and sometimes more.

It is of interest to call attention to these informal banquets, because the speakers endeavored not merely to show their appreciation of the fact that men from all parts of the United States were thus affiliating themselves with the armies of France, but especially to point out the significance of this fact, which gave courage to the hope that more and more Americans would rally to the cause until it might become a national one. Even when





Mr. Muir    Mr. Galatti    M. Jules Cambon    Mr. Andrew    Ambassador Sharp    Dr. Gros  
HEAD-TABLE AT THE FAREWELL DINNER FOR SECTION FOURTEEN, MARCH 15, 1917





Ambassador Gerard was recalled from Germany, and later, after war was declared, the Field Service was still for some months the forerunner of the American army in France, and so naturally these gatherings retained their significance.

Let us look in for a moment at one of these dinners. Section Fourteen is to leave to-morrow morning for the front. The large panelled dining-room, its walls bare except for the American and French flags crossed above the speaker's table, is alive with the youthful faces of a group of students who have crossed the continent as well as the ocean to offer their services to France. This body of men from Leland Stanford University was given an unprecedented farewell by their enthusiastic fellow citizens in a large mass meeting at San Francisco. In New York, again, they were fêted and cheered. Now that they are leaving for their work at the front there is no great throng to wish them luck, for the real business has begun, but France has thought it worth while to send one of her foremost ambassadors, rightly feeling that these men represent a sympathy the seeds of which are fast bearing fruit. And in addition to Ambassador Jules Cambon, the other distinguished guests at the speaker's table are Ambassador Sharp, Consul-General Thackara, and Captain Aujay, as representative of the French General Headquarters.

The excellent meal is over and the speeches have begun to strike the keynote of the evening.

Mr. Andrew, in introducing Ambassador Sharp, lays stress on the significance of the American volunteer's presence in France:

You, who are here, will realize, as the days go by, that you are not merely here to serve France, but that in a much more real sense, you are here to serve your own country. You are here to help in keeping alive in France that ancestral friendship which dates from the beginnings of our own history. You are here to make the people of France feel and realize what the American people feel about them.

There are men here to-night from twenty-two different

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

States of the Union, the representatives of eighteen American colleges and universities, and while for the next few months you are going to be the ambassadors of America in France, for the rest of your lives you will be the ambassadors of France in America. You are going back to your homes after six months, or nine months, or a year, or at the end of the war whenever it may come, to tell the people in America what you have seen and felt in France. You are not only going to tell them of the beautiful heritages of the past which you have seen and are going to see, but of the wonderful ideals of these French people, what they stand for, and you are to make them believe that these ideals are the ideals for which we stand, for which America stands; the ideals which Jefferson brought back from France, the ideals which were incorporated in the Declaration of Independence and which form the fundamental compacts of our Constitution.

Ambassador Sharp speaks in part as follows:

There is one thing that has come into my mind to-night in connection with the remarks of the Chairman, and especially in connection with the name of this organization, and that is this thought: that I know of no higher aim in life than the aim to be of some real service to your fellowmen. I know of no higher mission than that. I know that young men are thoughtless and that they live unto themselves a great deal for the pleasures that are about them. It does take time and it does take experience to come to realize the full measure of the truth that I have uttered, that service to your fellowmen, after all, is the measure of the fruitfulness of your own life in this brief span that you are on earth. I know of no higher service, not alone to be of service to your fellowmen, but to be of the kind of service that you embarked upon when you left that far-off City of the Golden Gate of California, speeding across the three thousand miles of matchless territory, and across a country that, with all due deference to noble France, — I will not say in the presence of those who thus honor France, her superior, — oh no, not that, — but equal to any other country on earth — your own country.

Some of you young men have been over on these shores a little longer than others, some of you are very recent newcomers. I have been over here several times in my lifetime, and during this last stay now approaching three years. But if you find the same experiences that I have found in living among the delightful people of France, you will have many, many pleasant recollections to treasure up in after years of your life.

In your service over here (for without undue praise, but just that kind of tribute that is filled with truth), you will find that there is no nobler, more exalted race of people on earth than you will find in the domain of France.

You will find a constant inspiration here that causes the people of France to be always, as a sort of inherent nature, as it were, kindly disposed toward everybody, with an open hand, with a desire to please, and above possibly any nation with which I have had any experience, an inspired love of country. And it is that love of country that has prompted the men with whom you are so soon to become more or less associated, to lay down their lives, just as your Chairman has depicted here to-night, without thought, without care if that sacrifice be to attain the undying principles for which France is to-day giving up her best treasures.

Then Captain Aujay arises to extend to these young volunteers the welcome of the French armies:

A pleasant journey and a good campaign to Section Fourteen!

At the moment of your leaving, in order to proceed to our front, this ancient dwelling, to which still clings the memory of the great Franklin who once lived here, I wish to express, in the name of the Director of the Automobile Service, the good wishes and thanks of the French combatants whose perils and glory you are about to share.

Willing champions of justice and right, you believed that it was not sufficient to feel from the depths of your conscience the horror of crime, the hatred of felony, the contempt of good faith violated, and disgust at treachery; you wish to convert your belief into action, and you have chosen one of the noblest lines of action by consecrating yourselves to the relief of our heroic wounded.

All, without exception, will remember, with a gratitude which often brings tears, having seen American volunteers mingle with the soldiers of France, under the same shells and the same machine guns for the same ideals.

We have seen your Service, small at first, grow unceasingly to the point of becoming at the present time the most important collaboration that has been added to our Automobile Service.

Let me repeat from the depths of my heart, a pleasant journey and a good campaign to S.S.U. Fourteen.

And so it was that many new friends, most of whom

have already been mentioned in a previous article, took their place in the life of "rue Raynouard." Their memory is an added glory of those days: M. Hugues Le Roux, with his ardent patriotism, exemplifying the sacrifice that France was knowingly making without fear or hesitation; Captain Gabriel Puaux, and his brother Lieutenant René Puaux, who had served respectively on General Joffre's and General Foch's staffs, and who brought us not only nearer to the glory of the armies, but also to the culture and learning of France; Abbé Dimnet, bringing French university life near; M. Etienne Grosclaude, with his fund of knowledge of the political thoughts of the day; Mr. Robert Bacon, by his own example best symbolizing the possible extent of the force of one man's activity in bringing about a closer friendship and understanding between two countries; and among others of our countrymen whose interest brought them to us, Colonel (now General) Marlborough Churchill, Dr. John H. Finley, Mr. Frank H. Simonds, and Mr. Will Irwin.

There was no other fixed form of entertainment for the men at "rue Raynouard." It was felt that in furnishing a library, writing- and living-rooms, each man would find there what he wished for himself. Organized entertainment was not necessary, and its absence helped more than anything else in conserving the charm of the place as a home for the men. Even during the period of the greatest activity of the Service, these rooms were always open for the men to talk, loaf, read, or write in. In the minds of most of the members, however, the memory of "rue Raynouard" is not alone that of a comfortable home. Mingled in its associations is the recollection of the busy service that was being performed there, and it is interesting to note that various members, who long afterward have written down their impressions of their first days in the Service, have placed the emphasis on the activity the newcomer found there. So much of this activity directly concerned the men themselves that a short description of some of its phases may be the means of casting light



on the important elements of the volunteer's life at "rue Raynouard."

In spite of all the papers needed in America before embarking on the steamer, the moment the volunteer arrived in France provision had to be made for his safe conduct, and orders sent to Bordeaux to bring him to Paris under a military pass. Once there, in the eyes of the French Government he was still a civilian, and would be until the armies could control his movements. Certain papers for residence in France had to be obtained and at the same time a request made for military papers to enable him to be sent to the front. Satisfactory relations with the various French *bureaux* had to be maintained for these purposes. There could be no inaccuracy in the details given, for France could not afford to be in any doubt as to what neutrals were in her country or among her armies.

The newcomer must be taught to drive a Ford. He must obtain his uniform and the equipment which experience had taught was necessary. He must be inoculated for typhoid and given a medical examination. All this had practically to be done for him. It was not in itself a great task, but it became so when it had to be concentrated into the limited time of a few days. The men had come over for work at the front and their place was there, not in Paris. Furthermore, steamers arrived every week from America with new men, so that as many as possible must be sent off to the front before the next boatload arrived.

Supplies also brought their problems. All Ford *chassis* and spare parts, and some of the equipment and food supplies came from America. Their unloading at Bordeaux or Havre was only the beginning of the work they entailed. *Chassis* could be brought by road when drivers and mechanics were available, but usually not enough men could be spared, and representatives sent to the ports must pick out their own shipment from among

the innumerable boxes and cases which littered the wharves, and often overflowed into the adjoining streets and squares. To be sure, military requirements took precedence, but precedence was of little avail when not even half enough shipping space on the trains was available for military necessities alone. Constant ingenuity and labor were required, and even then delays could not be avoided.

But even the demands of men and supplies coming from America were only half the detail work that had to be done. The front had its claim, and the sections must be provided with whatever they required. Also the men at the front were continually writing for new personal equipment, and such purchases must be attended to without delay. Packages and mail from America must be sorted and redistributed. The men's money left in our charge must be sent to them on demand, and their passports, expiring after six months, must be renewed. Above all, food and beds must be furnished for all who returned from the front, and economical catering for an uncertain household was not at all an easy task, for it was not at all unusual for from twenty to fifty men to drop in during the day without previous warning. As many supplies as possible must be bought in France, a difficult task, indeed, when the demands of the war had long since out-distanced production in every field. It required constant effort to meet the needs of the sections in procuring tools of all kinds — tents, ambulance accessories, equipment, etc. Our headquarters, too, called for supplies such as beds, blankets, and coal for an ever-increasing household.

Add to this detail work the supervision of a small hospital established on the grounds for men of the Service, and the reader will have some knowledge of the organization of "rue Raynouard" as the volunteer saw it. The general direction of the Service and the maintenance of relations with the French authorities, with other organizations, and with the donors of cars, naturally

centred here, but this did not form a part of the activity with which the average member was familiar. The detail work of the staff did, however, because this directly affected the men and indeed very often required their coöperation. The registration at Police Headquarters for procuring the newcomer's papers, and his purchase in Paris of such equipment as could not be supplied at headquarters, necessitated the help of the more experienced men in piloting the others about the city. Learning to drive on old "74," became a serious matter, for, until the test was passed, there was no chance of being sent to the front. The need for equipment brought every one in contact with the headquarters store and with those who served there, and I do not think that there was a pleasanter store to deal with in all Paris. Ford *chassis* meant trips to Bordeaux with some member of the staff in charge, and a trip through the château country, furnishing, perhaps, almost as vivid a memory of France as the front gave later on. The handling of cases arriving by rail impressed upon the men that a day laborer's job was often a part of the soldier's game, and any one who had had any experience with clerical work or typewriting found himself detailed to help keep the records in shape.

So in the first few days of their stay in France, they took their turns in working with the staff. They learned to know its personnel, and they found, what must have been a satisfaction to them, that no hours were too long, day or night, when there was work to be done. There were comparatively few on the staff at "rue Raynouard." The call of the front was too enticing for volunteers, and an organization maintained by voluntary subscription is limited in its quest for help. There were certainly never more than twenty-five under whose jurisdiction were maintained the general office for papers and records, the cashier's department, the buying department, the store and mail-order office, the publication of the "Field Service Bulletin," driving instruction, the dining- and mess-rooms, the dormitories, the infirmary, the post-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

office, baggage storeroom, etc. The cheerful willingness and coöperation in meeting the day's task, to whatever hour of the night it led, made life very pleasant for those whose privilege it was to direct the Service, and it played an important part in the affection which the men had for "rue Raynouard."

It is undoubtedly true that it would have been possible to carry on the work of the American Field Service without "rue Raynouard," and that the actual work of the sections at the front would have accomplished the same results. And yet the place somehow had its part in every activity of the Service, supplying something which made life for the men pleasanter. There was no need of a home — certainly no need of a beautiful home — and yet how much happier the men were for it, and how much pleasanter that it should be the finest in Paris. It was not necessary that the men returning from the front should find there a meeting-place for friends, but it helped pass many a pleasant hour for them. It was not essential to the life at the front that there should be a place where the men could have personal matters attended to, and yet in providing this for them, "rue Raynouard" must have added much to the efficiency of their service.

Again, it served in the part the Field Service was playing in bringing together the two countries. There the American volunteer came in close contact with those things in France which would necessarily appeal to him most. In the generosity of the gift, he first found the welcome which he was never allowed to forget. There he found opportunities of meeting French people other than his friends in the Army, and so gain a glimpse of the normal life of France. And on the other hand, "rue Raynouard" attracted Frenchmen from every branch of military and civilian life, who learned much of America from this contact with her young representatives.

And so we find the place that "rue Raynouard" filled never particularly defined, but always associated in some way with the men and their work. The affection which

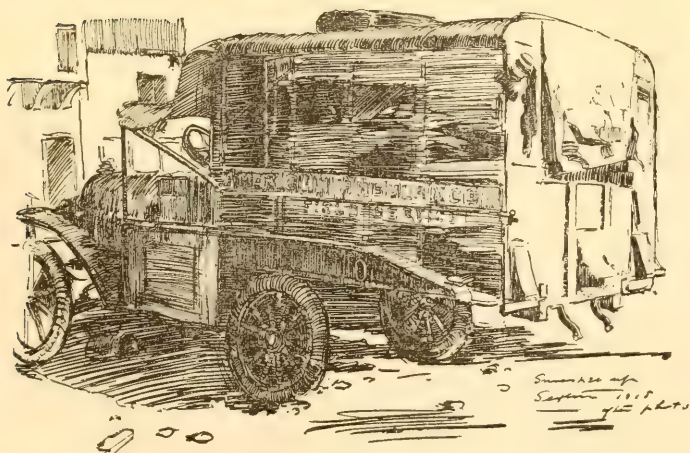


## TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD

---

the men bore it marked it definitely as their home in France. This would have been sufficient, but beyond this were the opportunities it gave to add to the scope of the Service. In looking back over those years one wonders if it was not, perhaps, "rue Raynouard" itself — and not only the surroundings, but the happy and unselfish spirit which reigned there, making light of heavy tasks — that gave the necessary courage for continually furthering the scope of the American Field Service, and above all that made this Service such an important participant in the cause of France.

STEPHEN GALATTI



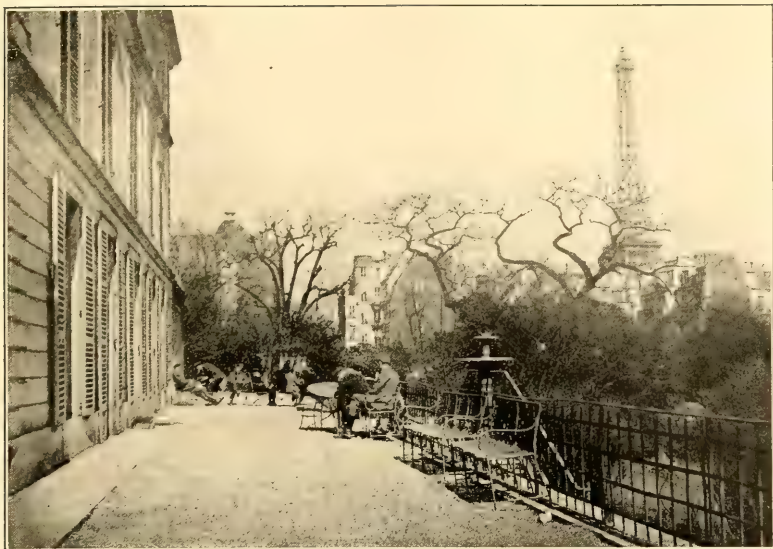


### III

#### MEMORIES OF 21 RUE RAYNOUARD

THE old Headquarters at 21 rue Raynouard are closed; the courtyard is no longer crowded with staff cars, trucks, and *camionnettes*; all the old wrecks have been cleaned out of the garden; the extra barracks are down, and everything will soon return to pre-war conditions. It is a sad time for many of us as we see the breaking-up of the companionships, friendships, and associations of more than four years of tremendous, tiring, worrying, but successful effort. It is a good time to look back and remember again some of our impressions of the old Field Service in the days when it was the only American organization in the war, so that we may carry away with us — vividly in our minds — the joys and sorrows, struggles, and successes of those days.

Once again you have just joined the American Field Service; your wild efforts to get a birth certificate only to find you had never been officially born, your horrible rush to the photographer, your trips to the French Consul, to the passport bureau, to the steamship office, your sad farewells with family and friends are finished. You are on board the steamer, land has faded from sight, and you are actually on your way to France. Do you remember the thrill of that thought? A week of uneventful shipboard life followed, with nothing but lifeboat drills to break the monotony. Then one morning some French sailors in uniform appeared and the gun on the stern was uncovered, cleaned, and tried out; the naval officer, who up to that day had spent all his time playing bridge in the smoking-room, mounted the bridge and took command of the ship. Two days and two nights of tense excitement followed as the ship steamed through the submarine zone, and then one morning you went on deck to find yourself quietly sailing up the Gironde; and a few



ON THE TERRACE AT "21"



MR. ANDREW ADDRESSING A GROUP OF NEWLY ARRIVED  
VOLUNTEERS ON THE LAWN AT "21"



hours later you were actually landed in Bordeaux, France! France itself, and the first step of your journey to take part in the war was accomplished.

Do you remember your trip across the city, and then your trip through the beautiful vineyard region around Bordeaux and the Garden of France around Tours up to Paris? At Paris you were met at the station by a man in khaki uniform who seemed to be most efficient, who knew his way about the dimly lit station, got your baggage, bundled it and you into the back of an ambulance, and whizzed you around corners and through black streets for an interminable time until you were finally deposited in the courtyard of "21." You did n't sleep very well that night; things had been happening so fast that you had n't had time to digest them, and you lay awake there in bed and thought them out.

The next morning followed your introduction to the men who were to guide your destinies for the next six months: "Doc," who greeted you cordially, told you how glad he was to welcome you to the Service, warned you of the — ahem — evils of Paris, made you feel you were the one man in all America he had been hoping would come over, and passed you over to "Steve"; "Steve," the *ad-joint*, who, as you later found was usual with all *adjoints*, had to know everything and to do everything connected with the Service, and was in general so busy that you wondered when he ever even had time to eat and sleep. Then there was "Bud" Fisher, who took the greatest delight in rushing you from one end of Paris to the other, from the *Préfecture de Police* to the *Commissaire de Police*, from the rue Pinel to Kellner's at Boulogne, and who made you sign your name to so many papers that you knew you would never again be a free and independent American. There was "Bobby" Gooch, who had to pronounce upon your ability or inability as a driver; there was Peter Kent who seemed to be always rushing to meet trains and who was always in such a hurry that he hardly had time for a "Hallo." Also there were Huffer, and M. and Mme.

Grimbert, Mlle. Bétourné, Jeanne and Miss Lough, concerning whose duties you were never exactly clear except that the latter could scold you within an inch of your life if she found you doing anything to upset the household arrangements.

Were you fortunate and were you rushed through in a week to join an old section in the field, or did things break badly for you so that you were held in Paris for some time? Do you remember the nondescript costume you went around in for the first few days — a service cap, a khaki flannel shirt, and a civilian suit — and do you remember the perfect pride you felt the day your uniform came home from Lloyd's and you first sallied forth in it? Then there were the blankets, the cot, and the field equipment to get, the *Permis de Séjour*, the *Permis de Conduire*, the *Carnet d'Étranger*, and all the other French papers to obtain. Your evenings you spent in the big living-room listening to the stories of actual service told by the *permissionnaires*, those proud men with the soft, floppy caps, who had actually seen that mystic place "the front"; or else you sat on the terrace of the *Café de la Paix* drinking *portos*, dined at the *Café de Paris*, went to the Alhambra or the *Folies*, and walked all the way home to Passy through the inky-black streets after the *Métro* had stopped running. Finally, however, your period of preparation was finished by a call to "Steve's" office, where you were then told you were to go out to Section Blank. Section Blank! Will you ever forget Section Blank?

You remember your arrival at the Section; you remember that first night in cantonment; you remember your first trip to a *poste* as orderly on another driver's car; you remember the first *arrivée* you ever heard; you remember the first *soixante-quinze* that unexpectedly went off rather close to you; you remember the first time you ever took a car out at night by yourself; those things are indelibly impressed on your mind. But do you remember the first *permission*, when you came back to "21" and were wel-



## TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD

---

comed by "Doc" and "Steve" as though you were the prodigal son returned? What tales you had to tell the new arrivals; how fine it felt to walk along the boulevards and know that you had actually been "in it" along with all these brothers in blue with whom you rubbed shoulders. They surely were wonderful days.

Each one of you has his own particular set of reminiscences which he will never forget, and which will form his contribution to the evening's entertainment in the years to come when this group gets comfortably settled in the club's big leather chairs — there is no need to recall any of these to our minds.

And now it is over, and "21" is closed for good. We must say good-bye to the old days, but we will keep them in our memory among our finest possessions.

J. R. GREENWOOD



## IV

### THE LAST DAYS AT "21"

It will always be pleasant in after years to look back through the softening mists of memory on the days spent within the hospitable walls of old "21" during the few weeks that preceded its closing.

They were indeed days for reminiscence. It was perhaps the only place in France where an *ambulancier* or *camionnier* could feel perfectly at home. And not among the least of the satisfactions of visiting it was the fact that there distinctions of rank, which the American army enforced with a punctiliousness that reached the point of falling over backward, were forgotten. It was no mean privilege for those who joined the army and remained in the ranks to feel that because of common traditions of old Field Service days, one could say "Bill" and "Jack" to an old friend at "21" regardless of how he was dressed or regardless of how one would have addressed him had he been encountered anywhere else. The democracy in which most Field Service men lost faith after they joined the army happily did not suffer at "21." There were no separate messes in the dining-room, and I venture to say that American army discipline was not weakened by that fact.

The closing weeks were an opportune time for meeting friends of other days. Ambulance men met friends of other sections to recall, perhaps, that their last meeting had been one night at the front at such and such a place before the Armistice; *camion* men, who went with ambulance sections to Italy and then became *aspirants* in French artillery, saw those who remained in the Service and fought over the days at Jouaignes when they were all toiling through the dust on the Chemin des Dames. It seemed that almost all old Field Service men somehow

## TWENTY-ONE RUE RAYNOUARD

---

or other got to Paris, either to spend three days' leave or else to wait for a boat to go home.

It will always be pleasant to remember such afternoons passed lounging about in the salon, fighting over old *pinard* bouts or more redoubtable battles, waiting for five o'clock when tea was to be served, browsing through a book that was always within reach on a table, discussing anything from politics to religion before the cosy fireplace, flouting the exaggerated stories of how our compatriots won the war after the French and English lost it, waiting for the arrival of funds from some source or other. It was a pleasant life, and it made a returning *aspirant* linger a few days longer with perfect content when he learned that his sailing date had been postponed. At "21" radicals could talk with perfect frankness and simple *soldats* of the American army could give vent to their feelings, and youthful reformers could castigate modern society and feel sure that the walls had no army ears.

Every one looked with regret at the passing of 21 rue Raynouard and all that was associated with it. Priority and length of service in France, better understanding of the French, and numerous other things had, after all has been said and done, created an *esprit de corps* and a closeness of comradeship among those who volunteered in the American Field Service such as existed among no other body of Americans in France. Most of us now are glad that our service in the American army had kept us with the French army, and heartily concurred in admiration of its soldiers.

"Their manners, their ways of expressing themselves,  
Their courage which nothing can quench;  
The humanest lot that were ever begot,  
Thank God, we've been with the French!"

DAVID DARRAH

## V

### O YOUNG DAYS!

EARLY sunlight on the cobbled courtyard, the stones cool and fresh from the night's showers, a gurgle of gay water down the gutter of rue Raynouard and the babble of many birds below in the green garden! Spring! Paris! The Field Service! And now we must say good-bye to it — that was home to us for so long — our centre of the universe.

How alive life was then — young — full of anticipated unknowns — zestful! Lord, we were rich then and did not know it half! We — the little ones who barked pettily up the trees of our small discontents, yet not meaning a quarter of our noise — as those who looked out for us were wise enough to know. We barked to hide the loneliness and fears of our hearts! And perhaps because we were ashamed to be as happy in such a moment as we really were. For we were in good hands, we newcomers!

Who stood on the terrace and gazed up at the slim lines in gray of the Eiffel Tower, and did not pinch himself to realize — the reality of it all? Whose breath did not catch in his throat as his eyes saw the house-tops, his ears heard the faint bustle of the city, and his soul reached out to comprehend?

O young days! O Service that for all our own blindness was a big part of our whole being! Service of friendships — and even a dim appreciation of France. We shall think often of you. All our little jobs were somehow haloed by it — from pounding typewriters to digging rain ditches round the tents. The front has been sung in all its phases — but after all we are going to remember almost as often the first days of the new existence in Paris in the ranks of the A.F.S.

Any one who has passed but an hour within the glow-

ing shadow of "rue Raynouard" can for all his life conjure up a memory that helps him. And in that memory are warm handclasps, good cheer and encouraging words, and kind faces. Perhaps we did n't realize it, but ever so slightly as they pressed upon the individual in the addled multitude of us the *Chef* and his Aide *touched* us every one — and we were different — were it even but a little. And we are grateful. Those two we looked to as the supreme powers of life. We cursed them if we had a tummy-ache — or if it rained. We sang their praises if sun and stars were bright. And only when we were shot out of the homeliness of "21" into the blare of the outside and the front did we realize what they stood for in our lives. Then to come back to them for a day — or a moment — their smiles carried us over hard leagues without notice of the hummocks in our way. I think we'll not forget.

That life in the spring of 1917! Breakfast in the cave! The big tin mess-kits — the hot milk, coffee, sugar even, and bread — to be arranged in various enchanting combinations. The wondrous breathlessness of those mornings before the day took fire and became hot. When the sky was aglow with pale colors — when the Tower cut clear as a sword held high, and the tricolor stood out a-top, stiff and brilliant against the blue. And the Seine below there glittering through the green. The joy of being alive — and ready, and busy a bit — made even those moments of marking time precious.

Did you perhaps drive a staff car with packages to rue Pinel, all across Paris so early of a morning? The war-blue car pattering through the cool streets of the wakening world — where one's heart was forever a-jump with the glory of exquisite, quick-passing vistas. To return when the city was already warming dustily to its daily toiling, and draw deep breaths of living! Perhaps you went to the *gares* to fetch back arriving *Chefs*, or baggage, and watched the swarm of *poilus* and dreamed of the front. There was little of khaki then.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Or perchance it was toil all morning in the storeroom, arranging blankets, canteens, and such — hot, back-stiffening, but not dull because of the dream in the back of your head. And you could stop for a moment and lean out of the wide window, taste the air of Paris, and look across the tree-green and river-blue to the shimmer of ivory buildings beyond, with the tumbled bustling great clouds behind.

In the general office the bang of continuous typewriters as the *fiches* innumerable were wrung out! Room cards arranged, and then gone over, and gone over again. Even shifting baggage in the cinema was possible — and it underwent the same transformation as all the other detail dirty work, just because of the Service. Somehow it was n't the army grind, nor the drabness of a "job." And one can't explain it quite — except that it was something inside that rested content not to be showy.

Then the hours afterward. To tread the streets of myriad dreamings — to take pride in saluting French *galons*. How in their innards they must have been amused, those precious officers, at our youngness and importance. To wander about, with a chum or two, finding our pleasures in the simplest way — of necessity — since we were not even thirty-dollar-a-month millionaires then. The long sweet dusks. . . .

Old Service that mothered us — days that petted us — and *Chefs* that we came more and more to admire. . . . How silly we are! Our gratitude is not a thing to be put in words — you could see it perhaps in our eyes . . . We cannot speak it.

J. W. D. SEYMOUR



## Training and Supply Centres

### I

#### THE OFFICERS' TRAINING-SCHOOL AT MEAUX

THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE boasted many remarkable sections, but Section Twenty, which was the technical name of the training-schools of the Field Service, was unique. It achieved among other remarkable feats the geometric impossibility of being in two places at the same time. In fact Section Twenty as a united whole existed only as an administrative fiction, an abstract conception of French *paperasserie*. The only reason for joining its two otherwise independent parts under one number was that both were commanded by that able and energetic French officer, Lieutenant de Kersauson. But if the link between them was tenuous, each sub-section, considered by itself, had a positive existence and a career not without importance in the history of the Field Service. Let us consider first the elder branch, elder both in age and dignity — Section Twenty, *C.I.A.* (*Centre d'Instruction Automobile*).

During the spring of 1917 the Field Service was rapidly expanding. The pace of the creation of four sections a year, which had looked good in 1916, was now speeded up to a section a month; and there was every prospect that this was merely a warming-up jog around the track

compared to what was to come later. The organization had to grow or be swamped. It grew; and one phase of its growth was the formation of both parts of Section Twenty. One vital need was to provide *Chefs* for all the new sections about to be formed, and to this end Commandant Doumenc, head of the Automobile Service of all the French armies, very courteously acceded to Mr. Andrew's suggestion and opened the French Automobile Officers' School in Meaux to members of the American Field Service.

They were a picked crowd, this first body of *élèves officiers américains* — all men who had proved their worth by long experience in the field, or newer comers of exceptional promise. Muhr, of Section Fourteen, and Freeborn,<sup>1</sup> of Section Two, dated back to the prehistoric days when the "Tent Section" went out. Henderson, of Section Fifteen, had been with Three in Alsace, while Iselin, of Twelve, Struby, of Two, Bigelow, of Four, Dodge, of Eight, and Read, of Thirteen, had been in harness for a year or more. Colford, of Thirteen, Wallace, of Twenty-Eight, Richmond, of Thirty, Houston,<sup>2</sup> of Twelve, Dougherty, of Thirteen, and Barton, of Fifteen, were the cream of the younger generation of our ambulance drivers.

### THE DAILY TASKS

THE first class at Meaux started in April and the Americans plunged at once into the work. From seven to nine every morning they listened and took voluminous notes, while the always patient Lieutenant Oliveau explained

<sup>1</sup> Charles James Freeborn, of Paris, France; Yale; served as aide to Mr. Andrew from March, 1915, and as *Chef* of Section Two from March to September, 1917; subsequently a Captain in the U.S. Army, and Liaison officer with the French, General Headquarters; died of pneumonia, February 12, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Howard Houston, 2d, of Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania; served in Section Twelve from February, 1917, and as *Chef* of Transport Section One-Thirty-Three until July 30, 1917; subsequently a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Field Artillery; killed by shell August 18, 1918.



Westbrook  
Cadman  
Gile

Scully  
Tinkham

Daly  
Bangs

Kennedy

The Drill Hour !



Class in practical technique, outside the barrack where *chassis* and motors were taken down and reassembled

ONE OF THE EARLIEST OFFICERS' SCHOOLS AT MEAUX





the nature of the Zenith carburetor and the position of bearings in a full-floating rear axle; they learned to apply the formulæ for adherence, tractive force, and over-all efficiency; they almost came to understand what happens when a Ford is put into reverse; and they copied from the blackboard complicated mechanical diagrams which, transferred to their notes, resembled combinations of an Enterprise meat-chopper with a White Mountain ice-cream freezer.

After "*technique*," there was drill, real *poilu* drill with rifles, under *Maréchal des Logis* Pallier. Then came luncheon, and, in the afternoon, shop work — taking down and reassembling Fords, watching a skilled mechanic perform miracles of forging, brazing, bearing-scraping; and finally there was freehand drawing. Oh, how everybody hated freehand drawing when a half-hour's anxious labor over the plan-view of a piston resulted, as the instructor cheerfully pointed out, in something resembling more than anything else a sprouting seed potato.

Later in the afternoon came topography; *service intérieur*, the first duty of a soldier; *service de place*, the law of garrison towns; *amphi-militaire*, the organization of the French Army with special reference to the rules of the Automobile Service. This last was perhaps the hardest course for old-timers to follow seriously. The problems were so familiar, and yet the theoretically correct answers were so different from the well-remembered practice. How, for instance, could a former *Chef* of Section Eight reply with a straight face that a section changing cantonment proceeds in strict convoy formation, in unchanging order, and at regular rate of speed? For was there not fresh in his mind that record-breaking trip when this particular section's cars spread fanwise over all the roads of eastern France, each following the moment's whim, and finally found their destination by a process of elimination, after visiting every village in the army zone until they had been to all the wrong ones?

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

It was hard to remember that the commander of a section needing spare parts makes out a *bon* and sends it to the C.S.A. of his division, who forwards it to the C.S.A. of the corps, who forwards it to the C.S.A. of the army, who forwards it to the Lieutenant in charge of the *magasins des pièces de rechange* at the army *parc*, who forwards it to the M.C.A., from which, if the *bon* is approved, the desired article returns by almost as tortuous a channel. Every American present knew that such a procedure would bring no results within the duration of the war and that the only way of getting anything was to write a personal letter — “Dear Steve: Unless we have band rivets in twenty-four hours, the Section can’t roll” — and, if possible, drop it in a civilian mail box.

It was difficult to believe that miscellaneous supplies of all kinds are to be asked for through the *Major de Cantonnement* instead of being obtained after dark from — well, there is no need of giving away trade secrets! But whether or not one was sceptical, all these theoretically correct answers had to be learned, for the professors at Meaux take no cognizance of such a thing as “*Système D.*” Who says that hypocrisy is unknown among the French?

So the days passed along, with variations on some afternoons when actual convoy runs with real Pierce-Arrow trucks were made and the boys took turns in commanding the convoy and issued orders to fit imaginary conditions devised by the instructor. “The Section will leave Meaux at 13.30, from *parc* at Barcy,” the order would run, “load thirty tons of barbed wire at Esbly Gare, and return to Meaux.” Receiving such an order at 13.25, the Commander for the day hurriedly appointed his *guide* and *serre-fil*, looked up the road, jumped into the staff car, and hurried off to confer with merely hypothetical *Commissaires de la Gare* and *Officiers du Génie*. Returning, he generally found his convoy either on the wrong road or spread out over a mile or two with the rear-ram drivers standing on their accelerators. Finally,

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

---

when the day was over and all the lost sheep safely parked again along the Marne, Lieutenant de Kersauson would go over the day's misadventures at length and with point, never omitting a single railroad crossing left unguarded or temporary bridge rolled over in close formation.

Sunday, theoretically a day of rest, was mostly spent in getting notes up to date. No one ran down to Paris for the afternoon, for those were the strict old days of Captain Champeloux and his wonderful Second Bureau.

### THE TORTURES OF THE CRAMMED

THUS five weeks went by with lectures and study, dirt and flies, and many little trips to the corner café for *crème de menthe glacée*, until at last examination time arrived, when the written tests were found not to be so very bad. True, most of the class drew inverse cone clutches that could never have been taken apart, forgot how many kilogrammetres are produced by one calorie, and ordered their convoy to travel in the wrong direction on a *sens unique route gardée*. Still, as examinations go, the class came through not badly; that is, so far as "the written" was concerned. But, oh, "the oral"! Strange that men who had driven calmly through shell-fire and aeroplane bombardment should have blanched and trembled so at the questions of a group of benevolent old officers. But the fact is that every one was fussed, and some were awfully fussed. However, no ordeal lasts forever; the examining board withdrew for consultation, and to the disconsolate groups of candidates, each sure that he had disgraced himself forever, came suddenly the glorious news that every one had passed!

And so it was all over! No, it was not! The scene simply shifted to the parade ground where a detachment of *poilus* was drawn up. And then more agony! Freeborn ordered "*Armes sur l'épaule*" three times, but, having forgotten the order of execution, got no answer whatever, and came back to "*Garde à vous.*" Every one took his

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

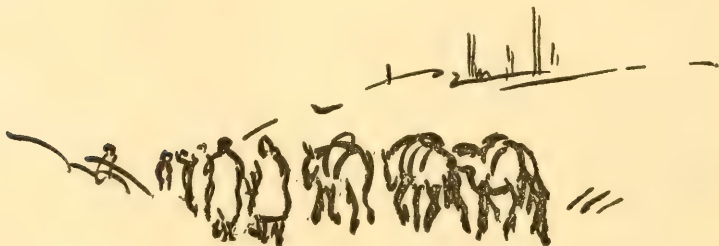
---

turn. Some did poorly and some worse, but all went through the most miserable minutes of their lives, when finally even this refinement of torture ended, and then it was nothing but handshakes, dinners, speeches, and congratulations.

Then, every eight weeks, another American class graduated from Meaux with varying experiences and success. None of them, however, equalled this first "bunch." The later classes boasted some glorious good fellows, some redoubtable *techniciens*, but their story is matter-of-fact and colorless in comparison with the doings of the pioneers. To the first fourteen belong all the glamour and credit of new adventure. With no record of other men's success to sustain them, they blazed the new trail. They established the record of S.S.U. Twenty, *C.I.A.*, and — the "breaks" they made at examination were negligible compared to the general average — they set the standard high. Their successors maintained that standard, but the glory belongs to the pioneers.

JOHN R. FISHER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Arlington, Vermont; Columbia, '04; joined the Field Service in May, 1916; served in Section Two, at Headquarters, and as commander of the Training-Camp at May-en-Multien; later a Lieutenant and Captain in charge of a *Parc* of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.





## II

### THE SERVICE TRAINING-CAMP AT MAY-EN-MULTIEN "KINDERGARTEN"

IF the branch of Section Twenty at Meaux was a sort of post-graduate course for the chosen few, the branch at May-en-Multien was more like a kindergarten class through which all new ambulance drivers had to pass. Its establishment was due to the same sudden enlargement of the Field Service; for during the spring of 1917 the greatly increasing numbers of volunteers arriving from America began seriously to overtax accommodations at 21 rue Raynouard. Many new sections were formed and sent to the front, but as the weeks went by it became more and more evident that ambulances could not be turned out fast enough to take care of the supply of men. The presence in Paris of a large number of idle *ambulanciers* killing time and wasting money about town was recognized as being equally bad for the men and for the reputation of the Service; so steps were at once taken to organize a training-camp where recruits could receive instruction under conditions approximating the healthy life of field sections. A suitable site was found nineteen kilometres northeast of Meaux, where a friend of the Service offered the use of a large empty mill building, just below the village of May-en-Multien, in the historic, mosquito-haunted, but beautiful valley of the Ourcq.

Section Twenty, D.A.F.S. (Dépôt of the American Field Service), began its active existence on June 12, 1917, when the first detachment of one hundred and fifty-two men arrived by train at Crouy-sur-Ourcq and marched two miles over to the Moulin de May-en-Multien, where they found the camp not altogether unprepared for them. The four floors of the old stone mill building had been cleaned out and one hundred and seventy cot-beds set up.



But beyond this, nothing! However, the day was clear and warm, and the officers improvised lengthy speeches until the hurriedly despatched *camion* could get back from Meaux with materials for a cold lunch. So every one finally had something to eat, and all started to work in good spirits organizing the cantonment.

Progress at first was slow. For many days the men ate their meals sitting on the stones of the paved courtyard and washed as best they could in the mill brook. But they never complained at hardships which, though light when compared to those endured by men at the front, were enough to try the temper of new recruits. Above all, they and their successors were willing to work; and, divided into squads under leaders chosen from among their own number, they did fatigue duty, and learned French drill and practised driving as much as possible. But let us be honest about this last statement. Not much in the way of driving was possible during the first weeks, for there were but three Fords, no tools, and many breakdowns. A volunteer squad of mechanics, with a pair of pliers, strong fingers, and lots of good-will, did indeed change a valve spring; but no amount of ingenuity could improvise new bands for the *camionnette*.

The real work at the start was the improvement of material conditions, and this went on rapidly. First, tents were set up in the courtyard for shelter in wet weather, which, later, were replaced by a long *baraque* Adrian furnished with tables and benches enough to seat a full camp. At meals, instead of the slow procession of men carrying individual mess-kits, there was substituted a service by platters, one man bringing in the food, hot from the stove, for his table of eight. In the kitchen four civilian cooks, working over a hotel range, established the camp's reputation for good food. The cellar was cleaned out, bins were built, and the reserve stock of food was kept in good condition. After meals, two *lessiveuses* provided warm water for washing mess-kits. Improvement was made in the management of the food-

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

---

supply problem, too; and it was needed. At first no one knew anything whatever about it. Every morning a couple of men were chosen from the crowd, one of whom was reasonably sure to get the car to Meaux and back, and the other speaking a little French. A hurried consultation was held with the cooks, some money was advanced, and then the car went off and brought back almost anything it could get. But as time went on, the *ravitaillement* was put under more competent management when we found it possible to provide plenty of good food at a cost which compared favorably with the expenses of other sections.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the personnel of the camp was anything but static. During all the confusion of organization, men were being sent out and recruits were coming in from America. Toward the end of the month, Sections Sixty-Four and Sixty-Five went off, forty-four men in each, to drive French gear-shift cars. A few days later the camp was again full to overflowing, only to be almost immediately cleaned out by the arrival of a telegram calling for three gear-shift sections on the next day. It was a hectic twenty-four hours.

### UNITS AND SECTIONS

THEORETICALLY the formation of a section is not difficult. One consults the list of available men, selects the necessary number, and the thing is done. But it never worked out that way in actual practice. Men persisted in not thinking of themselves as numerical units. They came from America in little groups from the same college; they had friends in sections at the front; they had formed friendships on the steamer; and were absolutely convinced

<sup>1</sup> EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE:—Mrs. John R. Fisher, wife of the C.O. of the Camp in May, rendered a devoted and invaluable service at this time, by taking charge of the camp mess, making daily visits to the neighboring market and supervising the preparation of the meals for the two hundred men of the camp. Mrs. Fisher, who writes under the name of Dorothy Canfield, has given in her volume, *Home Fires in France*, some appealing pictures of French life in the near-by town of Crouy during these months.

that the war would be lost if these things were not taken into consideration in the forming of a new section. These groups and friendships must not be broken up. Yet to some extent these preferences had to be overruled. A war was going on, although at peaceful May-en-Multien it was often hard to believe it. But it was the policy of the camp to overrule as little as possible. Granted that a war cannot be run along lines of personal convenience, nevertheless, the fact remains that, other things being equal, a contented man will do better work than a disgruntled one. This principle being admitted, the selection of personnel for a section became an almost endless affair of making one tentative list after another.

On one particular night the job was more than ever complicated by the presence among the latest arrivals of an Amherst College unit which neglected to announce its existence until the lists were all posted, when it received the news in anything but a tranquil spirit, that it was to be split up. However, late that night, after enough labor to organize a successful offensive, all the necessary exchanges were finally put through, and next morning Sections Sixty-Six, Sixty-Seven, and Sixty-Eight, all more or less homogeneous and more or less satisfied, marched off, loaded their baggage on the train, and disappeared into the *zone réservée*.

### THE CAMP AT TOP SPEED

JULY began with a lull, but soon became as busy as June had been, with the exception that, the camp being better organized and every one understanding the work better, the machinery of camp life, the receiving and despatching of contingents, ran with considerably less friction. Six sections went out: Thirty, Thirty-One, and Thirty-Two, on Fords, and Sixty-Nine, Seventy, and Seventy-One, on various sorts of French ambulances.

The comfort of camp also improved. A regulation army *lavabo* was set up outside the gate, a piano hired, and a small coöperative store and circulating library put into

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

---

operation. On the little drill ground those who preferred to take their recreation leisurely pitched horseshoe quoits in liberty hours, while the more actively inclined played many and exciting games of indoor baseball. The guiding principle of camp routine was to make discipline mild enough to avoid being much of a burden and yet strict enough to accustom young Americans unused to military life to regulations as rigid as they might find in any section at the front. A rising bell rang at 6 A.M. and another at 6.30 turned every one out, officers included, for roll call. Frequent inspections accustomed the men to coming to attention when an officer entered the room. Twice a day, under the French *Maréchal des Logis*, they learned the meaning of "*Garde à vous*," "*En avant par quatres*," and, most welcome of orders, "*Rompez vos rangs*."

While the rest of the camp was drilling, the fatigue squad cleaned quarters, sawed wood, and prepared vegetables. The remainder of the day was spent in the camp's main business — driving instruction. This course improved steadily from its unsatisfactory beginning until, by the end of July, it included, beside the usual road work, a short training in first aid to balky Fords, tire-changing, driving on roads strewn with obstacles, and backing through a sinuous passage marked out by wooden standards. The last exercise developed into a sort of field sport, and great ingenuity was shown in making the course more and more difficult, all the men off duty standing around to watch the contest and breaking out into derisive cheers whenever a contestant knocked over a standard, and into genuine applause when he came through with a clean record.

### ORDERS TO DISMANTLE — THE END

WITH August the work began to fall off. Sections Thirty-Three and Seventy-Two went out. But two sections a month was child's play after the work of the early summer. September had a still poorer showing. A few men



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

came to the camp, but more left it. The United States Army was beginning to arrive in France and the Field Service days were numbered. The regular army officials who looked over the Field Service camp thought it was too near to the front, and did not care to adopt it. In comparison with the days when we had one hundred and sixty men, the courtyard looked bare with only twenty-five. It seemed quite deserted with ten; and even these did not stay. For a little while two lone privates "held the fort" and gave the instructors something to do. Another week and they also were gone. Then one of the instructors transferred to the Engineers. Things were becoming desperate. The three lone survivors, all that was left of the camp's staff, smoked their pipes in the sunny court, found excuses to exercise the eight cars, fished without success in the canal, and wondered if they had been entirely forgotten. Then, one day, orders came to dismantle the camp. Extra drivers arrived from Paris who loaded everything, and the convoy rolled away leaving the old miller smoking in the yard as solitary as the organizing party had found him four months before; and thus ends the uneventful history of S.S.U. Twenty, D.A.F.S., a Section without citations, with no record in carrying *blessés*, and yet not undeserving of a place in this History.

It is hard to put a definite value on the work of the camp. Looking back with the fondness of memory, many Field Service men consider the time spent there as a delightful interlude between the turmoil of the trip over and the hardships of ambulance work. They think of the camp as an enchanted oasis, overlooking its discomforts, forgetting their own impatience to escape from it and go out to the front to do their part in a war which they feared might end before they had seen their fair share of it. Looking back in another spirit, it is easy to criticise the camp's many shortcomings. Even at its best, men were not as fully trained there as they might have been, and the best was seldom realized. The war was





THE FIELD SERVICE TRAINING CAMP AT MAY-EN-MULTIEN, WITH  
LIEUTENANT DE KERSAUSON AND MR. FISHER, THE AMERICAN "CHIEF"



always going on, new sections were being asked for, and men were frequently sent out with little or no training. All this is perfectly true. Nevertheless, in the sixteen weeks of its existence, seven hundred and thirteen men were cared for at the camp, and from it thirteen new sections went forth to carry on the traditions of the American Field Service with the French Army.

And now that the Field Service itself has ceased to exist except as a tradition, it is easy to see that the faults of the training were also largely those of the parent organization. The Field Service always worked under pressure and outgrew every system tried before it could be perfected. Undoubtedly the sections could have been better prepared if there had been fewer of them and if they had been sent out at greater intervals. But if our policy had drawbacks, it also had one great merit. Sections *did* go out, half-trained drivers *did* somehow learn to handle their cars, and *did* carry thousands and thousands of French wounded from the *postes* to the hospitals. It *did* get results. The record of the Service is beyond criticism; and the last word of an old ambulance driver, who in his time did his full share of grumbling and complaining, is a heartfelt expression of thanks that he had the chance to work in the American Field Service, of pride in its achievements, and of gratitude to those who made the organization possible.

JOHN R. FISHER

### THE CAMP ITSELF

IN JUNE, 1917, I left for the old grist mill with one hundred and seventy-five ambulance men, and was present at the formal opening of this romantic and noted camp where it was my task to try and improve the sanitation of the place and to look after the health of the American boys, which, I may add, was very good. During the six weeks I was camp physician the only sickness was a case of genuine measles and one of three-day measles; but there was no spread of the disease. The boys were housed in a

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

grist mill, said to be three hundred and fifty years old, which was run by water-power. The steel turbine wheel, the largest I ever saw, pumped spring water to May, two miles away, and also ran a dynamo which produced electric power for some of the near-by towns. In September, 1914, the Germans occupied this mill for a week, but they left suddenly and, contrary to their usual custom, did very little damage.

The old grist mill was four stories high, and made room for about two hundred and twenty-five ambulance men. A portable wooden barracks answered for mess-room and a smaller one furnished wash-room space. The offices were in an annex to the mill, and the infirmary and sleeping-quarters for the officers were over the office rooms. For recreation, nearly every afternoon at five, the boys all went swimming in the canal which passed not far from the mill, or they had football and baseball, pitched quoits, played cards, and took walks to the many and delightful old towns in the neighborhood. But there was one horrible drawback to the camp surroundings — the presence of industrious and large mosquitoes which, during the early evenings and dull quiet afternoons, were a hell for some of the men; for one full-grown French mosquito can make life miserable for a whole regiment. Aside from this defect, the Old Grist Mill Camp was a very romantic and beautiful place, which every American volunteer, who had the good fortune to inhabit it, will remember with pleasure.

H. BURT HERRICK, M.D.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Cleveland, Ohio; Western Reserve University; served as physician at May-en-Multien Camp from May to the middle of July, 1917.

### III

#### TRAINING-CAMP NEAR MAY-EN-MULTIEN

*July 13, 1917*

WE arrived by train at Crouy-sur-Ourcq on July 8 about 10 A.M. We were met at the train by Mr. Fisher, of the Field Service, who is in charge of the camp. The fifty-two of us lined up as best we could, considering we carried our bedding rolls, and marched out to camp in some fashion or other. A more wonderful country or location you could not imagine. We went up over a hill, and then down across a green, shady canal with barges tied by the banks, and then on up another gentle hill, past an old stone cottage with some fat white ducks waddling about it and squawking indignantly for no reason at all.

The camp is located in an old mill, I don't know how old. It is a building in the form of an L, four stories high, with a stream at one side which runs over a mill wheel. There is a stone wall around the other two sides of the L, and a farmhouse and farmyard in back. There is quite a lot of old-fashioned machinery in the mill, and sometimes when the mill wheel is turned on, the wheels and pulleys go creaking round, very slowly, while we are sitting there talking or reading. We sleep in cots on the fourth and top floor. Down below us is the courtyard, where some cars are parked, with a dove-cote, a wash-house and kitchen, a wooden military barrack used for a dining-room, a couple of trees, and some climbing-rose bushes. The courtyard has an old iron gate with an iron lion's-head knocker on it. A more romantic place you could not imagine. That wonderful and beautiful story of Zola's, "The Attack on the Mill," might easily have been situated here.

Crouy is an interesting, although not a lively little town. There is the tower of an old castle there, which is



very picturesque. Everywhere crowds of small boys follow us, the smaller ones in funny black skirts, the ones about twelve or so more like village boys in America. Most of them follow us as much from curiosity as from anything else, although an occasional one, more bold, hopes that we can be persuaded to give him a *sou*. There are a couple of awfully bright kids of about twelve, very neatly dressed, who meet us nearly every evening we visit the town, and go around with us. The sister of one of them teaches English, among other things, in a school somewhere around here. He knows quite a bit himself and was anxious to talk with us and learn more. It is easier — at present at least — to understand the French of the youngsters than that of older folk — they speak more distinctly and less rapidly. Whatever else may be said of France, her children are beautiful, polite, and altogether delightful.

At the training-camp those who need it are supposed to get instruction in driving Fords and French gear-shift cars. We get up at six in the morning to the violent jangling of an old bell down in the court. Then comes roll call, and the detailing of a third of the men each day to be on details and squads in the kitchen, dining-room, or around the camp generally. After breakfast (more often we avoid the military one and get delicious chocolate and an omelette from the woman in the farmhouse back of the mill) we go out to drill, under the instruction of an old French sergeant. French drill differs from American in that the movements as we execute them are often executed with an entire reversal of the same movements by the French — perhaps with little running steps to jump into place instead of our mathematically measured movements. All the commands are in French, and you may believe it's often pretty hard to keep them in mind and be able to think which one is which when it's given. How would these sound to an American soldier? — “*En ligne — Face à gauche!*” “*À gauche — gauche!*” “*À droite — droite!*” “*Demi-tour à droite!*” “*Repos!*” “*Fixe!*” “*À droite par*

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

---

*quatre!*" "*Rompez vos rangs!*" I confess that the last one sounds the best to me, for it's French for "dismissed." However, the drill is not too exacting, and the French Sergeant, for all his attempt to be sternly military, is a jolly fellow, and intersperses the work with "*beaucoup repos.*"

The other day he had been jollyng some of the fellows about getting tired. They decided they would lead him a merry chase, so suggested that we go on a hike. He agreed, and the whole bunch set out up the hill in ranks at a furious pace — taking long strides. We kept it up for about three miles, up through May-en-Multien and down toward the Crouy road and canal. The sergeant stuck right at the head of the affair, but, being forty-five or so and not used to such strenuous exercise, he was mopping his brow very frequently until we got in. He was a good sport and never said a word to stop the pace they were setting. The next day he lay on the grass beside the *Grande Route* and watched us drill for a short time, after which it was nearly all "*repos,*" and we lay around in the grass beside the road most of the time during the morning and afternoon drill periods.

There is also a black-eyed young Frenchman at camp who speaks good English — Charley. He was in the trenches for a long time, and every one questions him about his experience and about the war in general. A couple of groups of ambulance men having already passed through this camp, he is used to it, and has really become a human compendium — how exact I don't know — on France and the war in general. However he seems to enjoy it.

ROBERT A. DONALDSON

## IV

### THE FIELD SERVICE PARC AT BILLANCOURT

WHEN the *parc* at Billancourt closed another landmark of the old Field Service passed into tradition. It rightly claimed to have been the oldest landmark, for long before "21" had been thought of, the cars for Section Eight were delivered, and soon thereafter Section Nine, one early morning, rolled out from its gates to Alsace *via* Versailles. From then on, its business was to meet the demands of rue Raynouard, and car after car was delivered to be sent to the front or formed into new sections. At the same time spare parts were received, sorted, and sent out to meet the incessant orders from the front.

For those — and there are many of us — who came into close contact with the *Parc*, there are remembrances which go deeper than the nine hundred and eighty cars put together there or than the many thousands of dollars' worth of spare parts issued. What original member of Section Eight will ever forget those days at the newly established *Parc* where he worked as a carpenter, mechanic, and painter! — A good training for the work that was ahead. How many of those who volunteered to help in the equipping of cars there will forget how the French Army insists that tires must be numbered and recorded accurately! Some of them were section leaders later, and perhaps the training helped them. What section leader and mechanic has not felt the *Parc* was an intimate part of his daily work, looking on it either as a friend or as an enemy, depending on the way his cars were running that day! The *Parc* stood for him as something to be telegraphed to or telegraphed at, always something upon which he knew the success of his section depended.

To a few of us — those to whom all of its details were in the day's work — there are many incidents which made that part of the work alive with remembrances. There

## TRAINING AND SUPPLY CENTRES

---

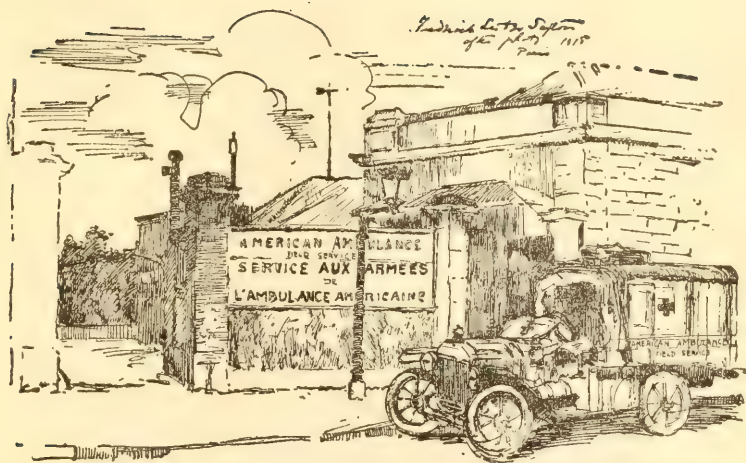
was the first summer when things were easy, when *chassis* were driven from the ports on wonderful summer days, and spare parts for the few sections were easy to obtain; then, quickly, the change when transportation was tied up, and parts, which foresight had ordered from America, were lost among the millions of cases in Bordeaux and picked out months later among those cases and brought up. Then came the period when *chassis* for which no gasoline could be spared had to be brought by rail in space which could not be got, but which was got. Then came the triumph of being able to supply Section Three on forty-eight hours' notice with the huge new equipment which its adventure to the Orient required. Then again the routine of the winter, broken by the unexpected early frost which froze the radiators of all the reserve cars, showing that the *Parc* was human after all. And finally the days of the next spring: days of terrific pressure when section after section had to leave, and at the same time parts and cars had to be sent to the old ones. Pressure which reached its height during the month of May when five new sections of cars were delivered at rue Raynouard!

The *Parc's* two years form a full page in the history of the Service, a fuller page than most members of the Service could realize because its work, like its founding, and like its termination, was done without fuss, but with always the day's work accomplished. Perhaps in reading this the men of the old Service will look back again on their days at the front and recall that good days and bad days were judged by how their cars were running, and perhaps they will find that the good days were more frequent than the bad days, and that the latter were often due to their own negligence. If they do they will realize what part of their success they owed to the *Parc*, and what was accomplished by Robert Moss and those who helped him in those two years of work which had no excitement or adventure, but which had their reward in work well done.

STEPHEN GALATTI







## *Two Loyal Friends of the Field Service*

COMTESSE DE LA VILLESTREUX

WE all knew vaguely, even before we reached Paris, that 21 rue Raynouard in which the Field Service Headquarters was established had been given by some one — we did not exactly remember whom. We had read of the wonderful old house and garden with its memories of Franklin and the old royalist days, but we vaguely pictured it as some conventional city home, steeped in an oppressing formality, and with perhaps here and there a bronze plaque.

Those first few days in Paris were too full of new impressions, and we were so painfully eager to become a part of this life that I am afraid we took our surroundings too much as a matter of course. But later, when we had time to adjust ourselves a bit, what a delight it was to wander about the old house and to feel that in some miraculous way it belonged to us and we to it; and how quickly the garden, sloping down to the Seine, came to mean a place where we could take our little triumphs and

disappointments and figure them all out under some old tree, quite forgetful of the city around us. And then it was we came to realize what such a place meant and would always mean to all of us, and the value of what had been given us through some one's generosity.

Then came the day when we first saw the Comtesse de la Villestreux in her nurse's veil, talking with Miss Lough in the hall, and we loved her from that moment. And the never-to-be-forgotten Fourteenth of July when we met her at the Grande Revue at Vincennes, and cheered, standing by her side, the faded blue coats and tattered flags. She consented to ride back with us that morning to rue Raynouard on the market *camionnette*; and what an honor it was to give up one's seat and bump along through holiday Paris sitting in the back on a sack of potatoes beside Touraine, the cook, who was busy peeling onions all the way.

She seemed so exactly what we thought a Countess ought to be, with an added simplicity and charm which somehow we had n't counted on, and it seemed so very fitting that it should be she and her family who had given us 21 rue Raynouard, and not only that, but their whole-hearted interest in the boys who lived there. If any one was sick the Countess made it her special charge to visit him daily and see that everything was done for his comfort, and whether he was in a pest-house with smallpox or in a hospital with a bad cold it made no difference whatsoever. One young American died in her arms, who would otherwise have had no one by his side to make the last moments a little easier. Nor did this in any way prevent her toiling daily in an important hospital reserved for the care of tubercular French soldiers. Service and self-sacrifice were so much a part of her daily life that many months after the Armistice, when Paris was torn by a subway strike, she, despite her snow-white hair and the weariness of four and a half years of war, was one of the first to take her place punching tickets for the welfare of her beloved city.



COMTESSE DE LA VILLESTREUX



## TWO LOYAL FRIENDS

---

In looking back on the time we have spent in France, 21 rue Raynouard stands out even more than ever as the centre of our memories of those bygone days. There we first came into touch with France, and with the mighty struggle in which she was engaged; there we came back after weeks at the front, to meet old friends, make new ones, and to talk over the changing fortunes of war; and there above all we always found a home, friendly counsellors, and the courage to go on when things were blackest. And in the background of all our memories of 21 rue Raynouard stands the Countess and her family whose generosity made such a place possible. Our gratitude is not of the sort that goes easily into words, but may they realize that what they have given us is the precious heritage of a lifetime!

A. J. P.

### MRS. W. K. VANDERBILT

ANY one who was in any way familiar with the trying problems which faced the American Field Service from its early days until the end of its career, cannot but realize what the Service owes to Mrs. Vanderbilt for her keen and unfailing interest in its work and the welfare of its members. Some of us remember her as far back as the first months of the war when, without her faith and her counsel, the Field Service as we have known it might never have come into being. And some months later it was she who made our independence possible, and opened the way for our direct assistance to France, unchecked by red-tape and limited only by the number of men and cars that could be procured from America. We can never forget her aid at this time, nor did her interest cease once our independence and future development were assured. When new headquarters had been found and were being installed in 21 rue Raynouard, she found many odd moments every day, despite the fact that she was busier than ever with her hospital



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

work, to help us in a practical, womanly way by hanging pictures, covering tables, and curtaining windows, to make our new quarters into a home.

Many of us remember, too, how she came to the front to see us back in 1916, when a trip to the lines was undertaken by few women. Mr. Andrew had telegraphed, "Will arrive with Vanderbilt," and we, thinking of course it meant her husband, were quite overcome by surprise when she appeared in our midst. She visited our most advanced *postes* at a time when our admiration for her courage was mingled with a sincere anxiety for her safety, and she spent the night with us at Pont-à-Mousson during a heavy bombardment. It was then that we found out just how enthusiastic she was about our work, and how eager to learn anything new about the problems and needs of our everyday existence. That indeed was the keynote of her interest in the Field Service. For four years she was indifferent to nothing which affected our work and the spirit in which we did that work, whether it was a mere detail or a far-reaching policy. And we who have known — as only young Americans in France in those days could know — what it meant to have such a friend, will always recall with deep gratitude what her unfailing faith and devotion did for us, and for the Service of which we were a part.

P. L.



MRS. WILLIAM K. VANDERBILT  
From a snapshot taken at the front





## *French Officers Associated with the Service*

AMONG the happy recollections of Field Service days none has left a deeper impression than the courtesy and kindness shown to us by French officers. In the sections at the front, although we were privates and directly under their orders, our peculiar situation as volunteers permitted them to invite us to their messes, and even when on duty to treat us with friendly familiarity. *Médecin Divisionnaires* and *Médecin Chefs* took personal interest in our quarters, our health, our games and *fêtes*, and other activities, and the regimental officers in general knew by name most of the men in the section serving them. This relationship helped, not only in making our lives pleasant and rich in companionship, but in obtaining without delay or friction the things for which we were dependent on the French, thus adding to the efficiency of a section in its work with its division.

This was an important factor, but much more important was the specific interest shown by certain officers at the French Army Headquarters, who swiftly recognized the possibilities of the Service, and opened the way to its free development. Most of these officers necessarily belonged to the Automobile Service of the French Army under whose direct command we were, and although in all our contact with those who were directing us we found interest and help, circumstances brought a close affiliation with particular ones. In recounting these

affiliations I can best show how much the direct influence and friendship of these men were interwoven with the history of the Service.

The first name which naturally presents itself is that of Commandant de Montravel, who later in letters to Mr. Andrew liked to designate himself as the "*père des sections américaines*." He well merited this name, for it was his personal decision which gave our sections a place at the front. We must go back for a moment to the little squads of American ambulances serving with the British and the French in the north, early in 1915, to see the importance of his action. These squads were only adjuncts to hospitals in a region where, owing to the concentration of the British as well as the French, and the natural consequence of the advance and retreat and confusion of the early days, there were sufficient regularly organized sections to do the work. In fact some of these American units were accomplishing nothing, and those in charge of them despaired of their ever accomplishing anything. Mr. Andrew, cognizant of this state of affairs, conceived the plan of attaching them directly to the French Army divisions, and with this idea in view, went to the Eastern Armies in March, 1915, and found at Vittel Commandant de Montravel, *Inspecteur des Automobiles de la Région de l'Est*. Commandant de Montravel welcomed Mr. Andrew's plan, not only with courtesy, but with warm-hearted enthusiasm, said that ambulance sections were greatly needed in the armies subject to his supervision, and he pledged his influence and his friendship to the project of trying out an American section with an army division. It was on this understanding that the section ultimately known as Section Three was tentatively organized and sent to Vittel as a trial section in April, 1915. As chance would have it, its arrival, after a three days' convoy, coincided with the arrival of a heavy train of wounded. The Section was instantly put to work, and the eagerness and promptness shown in carrying out his orders determined Commandant de Montravel to give it



a place at the front without further observation. He immediately asked that the section be built up to the standard size of a regular French army section, and he sent it down into the very appealing, and at that time, fairly active sector of *Alsace Reconquise*. Thereupon he asked for another section, and thus Section Two in the same month gained its place on the eastern front at Pont-à-Mousson. Upon his recommendation the French General Headquarters formulated an agreement for the utilization and control of these and future sections (which is printed elsewhere in this History), and requested that the squad in Flanders be increased to the standard sectional proportions, assigning it also to work in the advanced zone.

Commandant de Montravel passed from one position to another in the French Army, but he never lost his paternal interest in the young Americans and the Service which he had befriended in the early days of the Great War. Writing to Mr. Andrew after the Armistice, he said:

Je ne puis oublier, moi, que dès le début de 1915 une phalange de vos meilleurs jeunes hommes est venue nous apporter une aide aussi généreuse que spontanée. À moi qui a été un des premiers à apprécier leur sublime enthousiasme, il appartient de vous dire aujourd'hui combien j'ai été fier d'accueillir ces vaillants précurseurs de toute votre Grande Patrie, et de vous exprimer toute la reconnaissance que nous leur avons vouée.

Comme Chef de Service Automobile dans plusieurs armées, je les ai vus à l'œuvre (et depuis bientôt quatre ans!) : toujours prêts, toujours dévoués et infatigables; des héros sublimes et modestes chaque fois que l'occasion s'en est présentée. Permettez moi de leur rendre ici l'hommage qu'ils ont si vaillamment mérité. Tous ceux qu'ils ont secourus, tous ceux qui les ont connus, ne pourront jamais les oublier.

In eastern France the Service had another faithful friend in Commandant Arboux, *D.S.A.* of the Seventh Army from the beginning to the end of the War. Section Three first came under his orders early in 1915 and continued there until the following January. Section

Nine came into his region in the summer of 1916 and remained there until December, and when it was removed, he urgently requested that another Field Service formation be sent to take its place, a request which the French G.H.Q. endorsed, and which resulted in the sending, in December, 1916, of the so-called Vosges Detachment. Most of the men who came in contact with him will remember him as a very strict disciplinarian, for he personally travelled throughout his sector to see that his orders were being properly and promptly executed. Section Sixty-Four in their very earliest days learned what promptness meant, when Commandant Arboux, having sent an order for a very early morning start, arrived at the Section a few moments before the time set for their departure from his army, and watch in hand and with rather caustic comment, inspected their departure. His interest in the men may not have always been apparent to them, but Mr. Andrew and I never received a warmer welcome anywhere than when we stopped to see him at Remiremont on our inspection trips. When the business of the moment was over, he would instantly launch on the exploits of his old Field Service sections, recounting anecdotes about individual men, whose names he never forgot, and enquiring as to what had become of them. He always liked to point to a chart hanging on the wall behind his desk on which he had had painted the names of the Field Service men who had been cited in his army, and he never failed to make it evident that he took an especial personal interest in his American sections.

The severe fighting all through the years of 1916 and 1917 in the Verdun region naturally brought the largest concentration of our sections there. Commandant Pruvost was stationed at Bar-le-Duc or Souilly as *D.S.A.* of the Second Army throughout that time, and it was due to his appreciation of and interest in the Service that so many sections received important assignments in that army. It was true that a section would naturally follow its division into line, but the *D.S.A.* not only had the power,



LIEUTENANT RODOCANACHI  
Section Two



LIEUTENANT DE KERSAUSON  
Section One



## FRENCH OFFICERS WITH THE SERVICE

---

but used it constantly, of changing the sanitary sections whenever he thought best, either from one division to another or to the reserve. Also new sections were sent directly to an army reserve, and must wait there until the *D.S.A.* saw fit to attach them to a division. It was Commandant Pruvost's custom to welcome our new sections and not allow them to wait long for an assignment. The result of his friendly attitude was that the *G.Q.G.* nearly always sent newly formed Field Service sections to his army. Sections Twelve, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen, Eighteen, Nineteen, Twenty-Six, Twenty-Nine, Thirty, Thirty-One, and Thirty-Three reported directly to him on formation: a very high percentage, when we leave out the first four pioneer sections, Section Ten which departed to the Orient, and the sections on French cars, which of course simply replaced the French drivers wherever those sections happened to be at the moment. I remember seeing Commandant Pruvost for the last time in 1918 when he was stationed at the French *G.Q.G.* in Provins, and he took pride in telling me that new sections of our Service had always been sent to him for training and that none of them had ever failed in their work.

The Field Service contact with the French Army was a direct one with the Director of the Automobile Service at French General Headquarters, or his representatives. This contact need only have been a matter of military routine for, from the point of view of the *G.Q.G.*, an American sanitary section was used and administered as if it were a French section, the differences of supply, volunteer enlistment, etc., being merely detail matters, which, however complicated for us, were only of concern to a subordinate department of the French *G.Q.G.* That Mr. Andrew obtained not only the friendship, but the interest and confidence of the heads of this Service, made many seemingly impossible obstacles easily surmountable.



## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

Commandant, later Colonel, Girard was the *D.S.A.* — the Director of the Automobile Service — of all the French armies until 1916, when he was promoted to the Ministry and Commandant Doumenc succeeded him. Mr. Andrew's first meeting with Commandant Girard is of interest, as on his being able to establish a relationship necessarily depended the success of the Service. On the return from his visit to Commandant de Montravel, with the latter's assurance of willingness to give Section Three a trial in Alsace, Mr. Andrew's problem was to get the order from the *G.Q.G.* He was unable to get a pass to Chantilly, the orders at that time being very strictly enforced in regard to its sanctity from outsiders, but the necessity of obtaining this interview demanded heroic measures. A pass was obtained for a near-by town and it was easy to bluff the sentry. A fortunate occurrence now made everything easy, for Mr. Andrew met in Chantilly on his arrival Captain Puaux, an old school friend, then serving on General Joffre's staff. An introduction to Commandant Girard suddenly became a simple matter. Section Three was sent to Alsace, and contact with French Headquarters established.

Soon thereafter Lieutenant Duboin was appointed by Commandant Girard as *liaison* officer between our Service and his headquarters, and his constant visits afforded opportunity to discuss all service questions with complete understanding. Lieutenant Duboin did not confine his interest to headquarters, but sometimes accompanied Mr. Andrew to the front, thus becoming familiar with the actual problems which foreign sections faced within their divisions.

With the growth of allied and neutral participation in the French Automobile Service at the front and in the rear, a special bureau known as the *O.S.E.* (*Office des Sections Étrangères*) was opened in Paris to deal with the various foreign organizations. Among these organizations were the Norton-Harjes unit, several English ambulance units serving with the French Army, one or two

## FRENCH OFFICERS WITH THE SERVICE

---

Russian sections at the front, and the Paris evacuation service of the Neuilly Hospital as well as various American automobiles attached to other relief and hospital centres in the rear. Captain Aujay was placed in charge of this bureau, and naturally his contact with our Service was constant. Throughout the three years we found in him a steadfast friend. His task was no easy one, for one of his responsibilities was to see that the orders of the armies were followed to the letter in regard to the matriculation of cars and volunteers sent into the army zone, and the registration of all movements to and from that zone. Strict adherence to all details of army regulations is always harassing to the evenest of dispositions. I feel sure that Captain Aujay must have often in private given vent to his exasperation at the difficulties in trying to make Americans realize that "*fiches*" and "matriculation books" could be made as easily to conform to regulations as to their ideas of what was proper. But if he did so, he never showed it, and when emergency required, he personally attended to the minutest detail in order to expedite matters. His friendship was not only to the Service, but to the men themselves. He enjoyed coming to the farewell dinners given to departing sections at rue Raynouard. He always found there friends among the older volunteers and made new ones with the outgoing sections. No section ever left for the front without his hearty word of God-speed in which was reflected all the warmth and cheerfulness of his big heart.

Writing to Mr. Andrew at the end of the War, Captain Aujay recalled his appreciative memories of the Field Service in the following terms:

Soyez assuré que je garde de votre si longue collaboration le plus précieux souvenir. Quelle chose vivante, variée, souple, et toujours allante que l'*American Field Service*! Que de bons offices n'a-t-il pas rendus à notre cher Pays! Et si complète fut votre organization que lorsque l'Armée officielle vint — non pas vous relever — mais vous doubler, elle n'eut qu'à calquer les mesures prises par les volontaires pour être à l'hauteur de

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

sa tâche! C'est une de mes grandes fiertés d'avoir pu vous aider dans votre tâche, et je tiens à vous le répéter une fois de plus.

Captain Aujay had many subordinates, and so many of them were closely associated with us that we hardly think of them in any way other than as part of the Field Service: Lieutenant Thillard, his faithful *adjoint*, the genial Duc de Clermont-Tonnerre, who generally accompanied Mr. Andrew upon his tours of inspection, M. Perrin, *Maréchal des Logis* Bouchet, and many others, all of whom seemed to make it their particular purpose to help in every possible way.

It was, of course, necessary that the sections, being each an independent unit, be commanded by a French officer. The French *G.Q.G.* took pains to choose these lieutenants, not only from among those who spoke English, but with a regard to their ability to cope with the problem of commanding neutral volunteers whose discipline must conform to that of the French soldiers, and yet which could not be enforced by the same methods. That these officers won the complete loyalty of the men is enough evidence of their qualifications, but long association with many of them brought more than loyalty, for out of their leadership grew the respect and affection for the French officer which makes us ever happy to recall those days. The influence of many of them spread beyond their own sections, and the names of Lieutenants de Kersauson, both Rodocanachis, de Rode, de Turckheim, Reymond, Bollaert, Fabre, Baudouy, d'Halloy, Marshall, Rey, Pruvost, Goujon, Ravisse, and Gibilly, are known to most of the men of the Service.

Lieutenant de Kersauson commanded Section One in its earliest days. He had lived in the United States for some years, answering his country's call at the outbreak of war. It became his especial pride to convince his fellow officers that his American section was not only the best sanitary section in the armies, but that its discipline could conform to that of the regular army. His own en-



LIEUTENANT D'HALLOY  
Section Seventeen



LIEUTENANT DE RODE  
Section Three





## FRENCH OFFICERS WITH THE SERVICE

---

thusiasm was transmitted throughout his section in such a way that, although the personnel was constantly changing, the traditions of the Section remained throughout its service. It was a tradition which later gained for it the *fourragère*. Lieutenant de Kersauson remained with Section One for two years, and then, much against his will, was withdrawn to take charge of the instruction of Field Service men at the French officers' school at Meaux. In conjunction with this duty he was appointed to oversee the training of the new men at the camp at May-en-Multien. It was a fitting tribute to his previous success that he was called for this larger work in connection with the Field Service relationship with the French Army.

Lieutenant Reymond succeeded Lieutenant de Kersauson as French officer of Section One, and in him the men found a new friend and leader, in whom they placed their utmost confidence and loyalty.

One never hears Section Two referred to without some mention of Lieutenant Rodocanachi. Many firm friendships have resulted from the associations of men in sections, but none firmer than that of those who have served in Section Two with their French Lieutenant. Lieutenant Rodocanachi came to the Section when it was unattached to a division, and when most of its men were hardly optimistic in their vision of a winter in the Meuse playing the part of an evacuation section. Even at the front a Meusian winter wears down the stoutest heart, but just behind the front there is nothing to bring relief from the cold, foggy drizzle which penetrates deeper than the two feet of mud. Lieutenant Rodocanachi never spared himself in those early days to keep the morale of his men high, and he tried every method and trick his ingenuity could devise to obtain for them a division. His effort was well rewarded, for Section Two finally took up its rightful place again at the front. Throughout the next two years his active leadership obtained for the Section the most difficult work, and his own personality helped forge the strong unity of Section Two.

Section Three's personality was already formed by the leadership of its American commander before Lieutenant de Rode came to it. In him, however, the members of the Section found an added coöperation of leadership and friendship which helped to weld the unity of purpose of the Section, not only in the critical moments on the French front, but on the difficult expedition to the Balkans. Recollections of the very dangerous *poste* at Bras in 1916 would bring Lieutenant de Rode's name to the lips of every member of Section Three, for he remained there night after night until dawn looking after the men and the work. His action in choosing to remain with the Section on its transfer to the Orient, although he was offered the chance to stay in France, enhanced the esteem and respect in which he was already held.

As was fitting, the next oldest section could vie with its older brethren in its French personnel, and in Lieutenant de Turckheim its members found a quiet, firm leadership and a highly cultured and valued friend. It seemed quite in keeping with its leader that the Section always went about its business in unfailing regularity with little or no fuss, but always accomplishing its work.

One could go on indefinitely pointing out the influence which the French officers exerted upon the sections, how closely identified with, how much a part of the sections they became, how much their example and advice helped all of us in those days and, above all, what good companions and friends they were. Two of those friends we lost during the War. We looked upon Lieutenant Bol-laert and Lieutenant Baudouy as comrades. The former was killed outright by a shell while in command of old Section Eight, and the latter, commander of Section Fourteen, died in service. Section Thirteen also suffered a serious loss in leadership when Lieutenant Rodocanachi was grievously wounded while commanding them during the Champagne offensive of April, 1917.

I have touched earlier in this article on our direct rela-

## FRENCH OFFICERS WITH THE SERVICE

---

tionship with the French G.H.Q. established by Mr. Andrew with Colonel Girard. When Commandant Doumenc succeeded the latter, this relationship drew closer and closer. Commandant Doumenc and one of his aides, Captain Lorient, appeared to lay stress on the continual development of the Field Service. They wanted always more and more sections of ambulances for the French front; they wanted first one, then two, sections for the French army in the Balkans; they wanted as many transport sections as we could enlist. It was evident that Commandant Doumenc appreciated early the possibility of reënforcing his service by American volunteers. In its realization he knew that the task assigned to them must be important and useful, not occasional and auxiliary, and in his willingness to carry out this principle he encouraged in every way the Field Service development. I think every man in the Service feels that he was permitted to accomplish the work he had come over to do, as he would have wished, that is, with all the opportunities as well as with all the hardships of the French soldier of his service. Commandant Doumenc sent American sections to the best French divisions, and when war was declared asked for more of them for the purpose of incorporating them in his crack T.M. group, the *Réserve Mallet*. If it were only for his action in placing his confidence in the Service from the start, and thus giving it full opportunity, we should owe him an immeasurable debt. But he went far beyond this in his personal interest. He never failed to send a message of sympathy for the loss of an American volunteer. He frequently took several hours of his precious time to personally decorate a wounded American volunteer in a hospital, and he acceded to practically every suggestion made by Mr. Andrew for the welfare of the men, this often necessitating his own supervision. When one remembers that Commandant Doumenc was not only in complete charge of the whole Automobile Service of all the French armies, but also entrusted with the regulation of all the road movements

of these armies, one can appreciate what such constant personal interest in our Service on his part meant, and how gratifying, as well as helpful, that interest was. That the more far-reaching aspects of the Service did not escape Commandant Doumenc's attention is shown in a letter addressed by him to Mr. Andrew shortly after the United States entered the war.

Je dois reconnaître [*he said*] que cette œuvre importante, que vous avez su mener à bien, s'est toujours montrée à nos yeux, non seulement comme une aide effective pour nos blessés, mais encore comme un trait d'union entre la Nation Française et la Nation Américaine, avant qu'elles fussent alliées dans la même juste cause.

And he added:

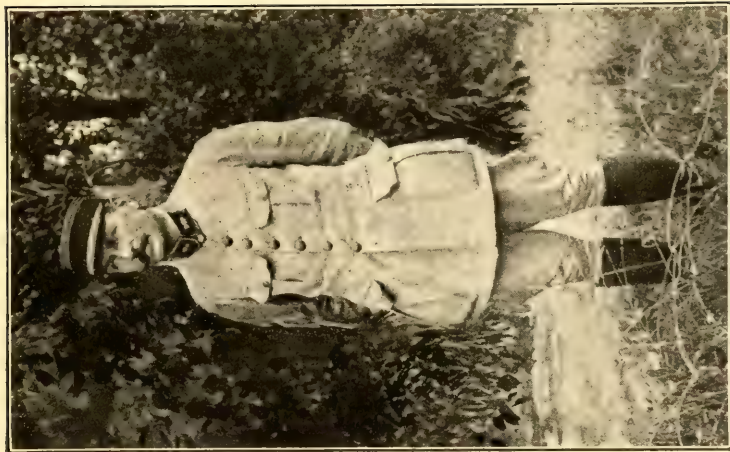
Je voudrais que vous soyez mon interprète auprès de tous les membres de l'*American Field Service*, pour leur témoigner, de ma part, combien j'ai été heureux de les avoir pour collaborateurs. Je puis dire que je les ai toujours trouvés les premiers dans le chemin de dévouement et de l'honneur.

No enumeration, however brief, of the friends of the Field Service in the French Army would be adequate or just which did not include the officers connected with the transport branch — the T.M. (*Transport Matériel*) — especially Lieutenants Gilette and Vincent, who so patiently and zealously looked after the training of the men in the camps at Dommiers and Chavigny, and Captain Genin, who commanded the first group of sections at Jouaignes. Who, of that *groupe* will ever forget the cordial interest of Captain Genin in his "boise" or the great out-door banquets that he arranged for them on improvised tables in the dusty yard at Jouaignes, when the long summer evenings were made gay with songs and stories and warm-hearted speeches, or the great celebration of the first Fourth of July which he arranged for several hundred men, with bands and entertainers from neighboring French regiments, and ingeniously contrived sports and "stunts," and abundant supplies of the wine of France which he himself provided!





LIEUTENANT DE TURCKHEIM  
Section Four



CAPITAINE GENIN  
T.M.U. Groupe 526





## FRENCH OFFICERS WITH THE SERVICE

---

Above all, must tribute be paid to Captain (later Commandant) Mallet, the officer in command of the *Réserve* which included all of the American sections, and by whose name that *Réserve* will ever be known. It was not an easy task to command a thousand American youths, who had come to France as volunteers, utterly unaccustomed to military discipline, and who had only time for two or three weeks' training, before being thrown into a hard service very different from their preconceptions. Such command required the exercise of an unusual amount of tact and friendly comprehension, both of which Captain Mallet fortunately possessed. With what thoughtfulness he assembled the men from time to time and expressed appreciation of their faithful service! Read this passage from his address on the evening of October 6, 1917, as an example:

Volunteers of the American Field Service!

The American Field Service has existed for almost three years, and had been doing wonderful work on our front for months when practically no American believed that his own country might ever be involved in this war. The whole organization has proved a great benefit to the French Army, and its promoters would be justified in recalling their work with pride. Hundreds of motor ambulances have been busy in the hottest sectors of our front. Thousands and thousands of wounded have been brought back from the fiercest battles that the world's history has ever recorded to find proper care and get back their health.

By entering the *Camion* Service you awarded France a still greater help in allowing us to send hundreds of our oldest drivers back to their fields which must be tilled if they are to yield bread to our people.

Be assured that I and all the Frenchmen who know something of the work you have done will always think gratefully of you and of the American Field Service which brought you to this country!

In a personal letter to Mr. Andrew written more than a year later, after the Armistice, and after his separation from the *Réserve*, Commandant Mallet testified again to his enduring gratitude to the volunteers of 1917:

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

---

I feel every day more deeply [he wrote] now that the victory is won, that your boys were the first pioneers of their country in this war, and I shall strive all my life to make France attentive to this fact and grateful for their work.

Assuredly then, we, who worked with them, shall think always gratefully of the hearty friendship and constant helpfulness shown us by those French officers who were so appreciative, and whose hands were always so eager to further every effort that we made.

STEPHEN GALATTI

END OF VOLUME II





*The Riverside Press*  
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS  
U . S . A











UMASS/BOSTON LIBRARIES



1002228656

D500.F75 A4 1 GC  
History of the American  
2



